Pride & Prejudice, Blood & Sex

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/21038591.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Bedelia Du Maurier, Freddie Lounds, Randall Tier, Alana Bloom, Franklyn Froideveaux, Dr. Frederick Chilton, Miriam Lass, Jimmy Price, Beverly Katz, Anthony Dimmond, Chiyoh (Hannibal), Tobias Budge, Francis Dolarhyde, Reba McClane
Additional Tags:	New tags will be added as the story updates, Alternate Universe - Supernatural Elements, Supernatural Beings are known, Incubus Will Graham, Vampire Hannibal Lecter, Sirens, Witches, Warlocks, Werewolves, Fairies, oh my!, Enemies to Lovers to Friends, canon level gore, Murder Mystery, Slow Burn, Endgame is Hannigram only, Don't worry if they fool around with others, Possessive Behavior, Murder
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-10-15 Updated: 2020-07-14 Words: 38,901 Chapters: 7/?

Pride & Prejudice, Blood & Sex

by house_of_lantis

Summary

In the modern supernatural world, vampires are the ruling class and demons are the bottom feeders. As a born vampire of pureblood lineage, Hannibal Lecter rules Baltimore with an iron hand and all are in his thrall. Will Graham, an incubus sex demon, doesn't follow society's rules and plays his own games. When he's brought before Hannibal to answer for his bad behavior, even he cannot deny that Will is an enchanting, delicious morsel. But can a vampire and an incubus demon overcome their pride and long held prejudices to become more than just blood and sex?

Notes

Written for the fans on the Hannigram discord server, especially Cinn and Bees. You guys rock!

If you want some more Incubus!Will, take a look at Cinn's fic "Ill-Fitting Lingerie" READ IT HERE

I'm back on Twitter! Come say hey: https://twitter.com/c_shinn

Chapter 1

When a born vampire of pureblood lineage reached the same heights as Doctor Hannibal Lecter, one assumed that he must be in need of a blood mate. Certainly, all of Baltimore was willing to kneel before him and offer their necks in adoration. However, despite their easy submission and the myriad of choices surrounding him, Hannibal was reluctant to take a blood mate, and even more reluctant to raise them to a status that was equal to his.

“Do you find my presence tedious, Hannibal?” Bedelia du Maurier murmured, her glossy red lips pursed with a small smile.

Hannibal opened his eyes slowly, pulling himself away from his mind palace where he had observed his memories of his family. He could still hear the sound of his sister’s delighted laughter, like a soft bell echoing along a dark hallway, her voice calling his name. *”Hannibal, I want to play!”* As born vampires, they aged much the same way as humans until they attained their First Death, locking them in time immortal until they reached their Second Death, which was a long hibernation, before waking once more to wrap up their business before choosing a Final Death. His darling sister Mischa would forever exist as a young child in his mind palace, his family slaughtered in Final Death so many years ago.

He gave her an affectionate glance. “Of course not. Without you by my side, I would find this life utterly without elegance.”

“I can tell that you’re bored,” she said, cocking her head as she gave him a more thoughtful look. “Perhaps you need something new. Something to brighten your palate.”

Hannibal leaned into the blood red plush velvet booth, looking out at the usual crowd in attendance. Bedelia had spent her exceptionally long life pursuing a number of different careers and businesses, but her curiosity of the mind always led her back to ventures that allowed her to observe and participate in scenarios where she could subtly move her victims around like pawns on the chess board of life.

The sophisticated gentlemen’s club, *Dolce* , was her obsession and one that Hannibal encouraged. He invested in the club nearly a century ago, and enjoyed himself immensely as it evolved from a secret speakeasy of the 1920s to a cabaret in the 1930s to a dance hall in the

1940s to a sex dungeon in the 1950s to a blood bar in the 1960s to an opium haven in the 1970s and to the old world amalgamation of a classic renaissance filled with the aesthetic touches that Hannibal preferred of today. He had no interest in the day to day business of running it. Instead, he had a lifetime membership and a reserved booth in the corner of the main salon, where he could sip blood wine and watch the humans and other supernatural beings being played by a master.

"What did you have in mind?" He said, looking at her mildly. He was always interested in Bedelia's games; she was adept at keeping him on his toes and could often allay his boredom for a short while.

She leaned closer towards him. Her long white blonde hair fell in a perfect wave over her shoulder. "I've made a new acquaintance, an enticing demon."

Hannibal raised his eyebrows and made a face. "A demon."

"And I've invited him to the club," she said, smiling coyly. "I think you'll be quite entertained in just a moment."

Hannibal could not imagine for one moment that a *demon* would be interesting enough to hold his attention. But before he could express his opinion on the matter, he was distracted by the wave of excited murmuring around him as their attention moved away from him towards the man who entered the main salon.

He looked to be in his 30s and he was uncommonly beautiful, with dark brown wavy hair and a perfectly symmetrical shaped face. He had light colored eyes, perhaps blue, and creamy, warm skin. There was a warm flush across his cheeks, giving him a youthful and healthy glow. And while the club didn't have a strict dress code, many of the attendees wore formal clothes, so a tuxedo or a gown wasn't out of place. The demon, however, wore a suit that was ill-fitted to his form, he wasn't wearing a necktie and the shirt was opened to showcase his slender and tempting neck, and his hair was carelessly brushed -- but despite it all, he was still the loveliest being in the room.

Hannibal was *very* hungry.

He would need to drink fresh blood and satisfy his urges tonight. He looked through the salon and found one, perhaps two, amenable companions for the evening. They noticed his interest and smiled expectantly at him. He would let them ripen a little longer before inviting them to his private rooms on the second floor of the club.

Bedelia chuckled under her breath, her blue eyes bright with mischief as she watched the people in the salon shift towards the demon. She gave Hannibal a very knowing look. “Oh, this is going to be fun. He’s going to be eaten alive.”

Hannibal didn’t want to admit that he was curious, and he was too well-mannered to scent anyone in public lest he show anyone special attention. “What class of demon is he?”

“Incubus.”

It was distasteful and Hannibal wondered what on earth had possessed Bedelia, one of the most elegant sirens in existence, to acquaint herself with a lowly, bottom feeding sex demon. Incubus and succubus demons were sexual scavengers, willing to seduce any human or supernatural beings in order to feed sexual energy from their coupling. Hannibal had encountered their kind throughout his long life and he found them to be vapid and vain, selfish and greedy. No doubt this one, no matter how lovely he was, would be similarly endowed. Hannibal had no time for such a vile creature.

They watched as the demon made his way to the bar, people parting the way for him, blatantly sexually suggestive with their eyes and their smiles, a few of the boldest ones reaching out to stroke their fingers along his cheek, pulling him close to whisper into his ear.

“Isn’t he sublime?” Bedelia said, her voice tight with amusement. “The lust must be overwhelming for him, but he’s in perfect control.”

“I would hope that any being, human or supernatural, would know how to control themselves in public,” Hannibal said, haughtily. He gave the people surrounding the demon a derisive sneer. “Tasteless.”

“Don’t be jealous, Hannibal,” she murmured, raising her hand. “You’ll have your time with him.”

He was absolutely not jealous, how insulting.

“What are you doing?” He hissed at her, frowning as she began to wave her hand in the air.

“Will! Will, darling!” She called, waving her hand, getting his and everyone else’s attention.

Hannibal clenched his teeth, forcing himself to clear any emotion from his face, as he watched as the demon politely excused himself and then walked across the main salon with his drink in his hand.

“Good evening, Bedelia,” he said, taking her hand and kissing across her knuckles. “You look beautiful, as always.”

“I’m so glad you’re here,” she said, smiling prettily at him. “This is my very dear friend, Hannibal. Hannibal, may I present Will Graham.”

Will held out his hand, meeting Hannibal’s eyes in a challenging gaze. “Hello. Who doesn’t know of Hannibal Lecter. It’s a pleasure to meet the vampire king of Baltimore.”

Hannibal stared up at the upstart demon, meeting his mirthful gaze, and then stared pointedly at the outstretched hand. As if Hannibal would touch him willingly!

“It is appropriate to bow,” Hannibal said, looking up at him.

Will placed his drink on their table and performed a low, formal bow. It would be considered a respectable bow in any vampire court, but he ruined the respectful intent behind it with the mocking look he gave Hannibal, holding Hannibal’s gaze the whole time, an amused tilt to his full lips.

If Hannibal was just a hundred years younger, he would've slashed the demon's throat where he stood, feasted on his blood, and impaled his bloodless body on metal stakes in front of his castle as a warning to any who would be so rude. Time and age had dulled the blood lust in Hannibal somewhat, it taught him to be civilized and a gentleman of darkness, but there were times when he missed the olden days where he could punish by his law and whim.

"You shouldn't tease him so, Will," Bedelia warned, charmingly. "Hannibal does bite."

Will laughed, picking up his drink and taking a sip of his whiskey. "I have no doubts about that." He turned and looked behind him, glancing at the people in the salon. "You have a nice place here, Bedelia. I didn't think places like this allowed in demons like me."

"Perhaps you should be more grateful to be invited, paving the way for more of your kind to attend these types of functions," Hannibal said, arching his eyebrow.

"Trust me, your kind has no problem slumming it in bars with my kind than we do hobnobbing it up here with you," Will said, grinning to himself and then taking another drink. "There are still many places in this city where we're not regulated by an antiquated, classist regime."

"Antiquated. Classist. I didn't know that an incubus demon even knew those words," Hannibal said, dismissively. The demon was rude and inelegant; he was making Hannibal's fangs itch under his gums and he clenched his jaw, turning to look past Will.

"I know a lot of other words, too," Will said, smirking. "Elitist. Pretentious. Pompous. Prissy. Full of sh--"

"Gentlemen," Bedelia admonished, lightly. Hannibal turned to look at her and she was bright with amusement, nearly drunk on it. "Now is hardly the time for such an impolitic discussion. Will, let me introduce you to a few friends of mine."

“Great,” he said, setting his empty glass on the table, nodding his head at Hannibal. “That is, if we have your permission to leave?”

“Do not delay yourself on my account,” Hannibal retorted, smiling politely. “Good evening, Bedelia.”

“Good evening, Hannibal. I’ll see you later,” she said, standing and tucking her arm around Will’s, leading him away. She turned and gave Hannibal a cheeky wink and then laughed merrily at whatever insipid thing Will said to her.

Hannibal sighed, shaking his head slightly. Their world was changing; supernatural beings have always had to hide from humans, keeping their powers secret. Many brave souls stepped into the light, demanding freedoms and rights equal to humans, challenging humans to open their minds and to see beyond their simple ignorance and fear of the unknown. Hannibal’s family, as pureblood vampires, led the way forward for the European families -- until they were cut down by human supremacists.

The European families looked to Hannibal, waiting to see if he would lead a war against the humans. Instead, Hannibal decided that a bloodless coup was more effective, and used the power of his name, his status as a pureblood born vampire, and his immense family fortune to bring his family’s killers to justice; and then simply took over, setting up a European supernatural court before moving to America to do the same here.

Will was correct in calling Hannibal the vampire king, but it wasn’t only of Baltimore. The city was his preferred residence and home to his court. His official title was Count Hannibal Lecter VIII, Vampire King of Supernatural Beings of America, Emperor of Europe and Asia. His beloved childe, Chiyoh, sat as Regent Princess of Asia in Tokyo; and his other beloved childe, Francis, sat as Regent Duke of Europe in London.

He should take some time and visit his two children soon.

Hannibal looked up and met the eyes of the salon’s Maitre’D, signaling him to Hannibal’s table. The stern and utterly disciplined werewolf gave a respectful nod to Hannibal.

The smartly dressed young man wore his designated red sash, showing his pack affiliation to the Baltimore pack; and the Lecter crest on his chest, showing his loyalty to Hannibal. He was clean shaven and his short dark hair was neatly combed, but it was the shine of amber in his eyes that showed his true werewolf heritage. The slender young man didn't look like he could win a fist fight, but Hannibal knew that Randall was extremely well trained to serve as the house protector for any family. Bedelia took a keen liking to him and asked Hannibal to assign him to her domain, as a special favor, and after asking Randall for his preference, Hannibal soon found himself bereft of one werewolf companion. It would take time for the Baltimore pack to properly train a new werewolf house protector, someone worthy enough to wear the Lecter crest.

"My lord."

"I am feeling peckish this evening, Randall. Is my room prepared?"

"It is always prepared for you, my lord. Shall I fetch tonight's menu for your perusal?"

"No need, I've already made my selections for this evening," Hannibal said, scanning the salon for the red haired woman in the green dress and the short Asian man with the dragon tattoo on the back of his neck. He gestured to them and smiled at the werewolf.

Randall gave a polite bow, his young face stoic and serious. "I shall have them meet you in your room in 15 minutes, my lord."

"Thank you, Randall," he said, dismissing him.

***

On occasion, Hannibal had to see to his duties to his court, especially when members of the supernatural community needed to settle disputes or if they broke supernatural laws. On rare occasions, Hannibal also meted out punishment to those who didn't break a law but violated social protocol amongst them.

So a cold thrill slithered through his bones when he saw Will Graham's name listed on the morning's docket. He sat in his usual chair on the stone dais, nodding for his Seneschal to bring in the complainant and the respondent.

A human woman walked into the room, dressed in a tight red dress, a black and white graphic print jacket, high heels adding inches to her petite frame, and her long red hair falling in perfect spiral curls down her back. She was lovely and quite determined.

Following her into the room at a slower gait was the incubus demon. He looked scruffier than that night at the club, nearly a week ago, and he wore a hideous green plaid shirt and brown khaki pants. Hannibal didn't need to breathe, but he inhaled sharply at the visual assault on his senses by Will's sartorial choices.

Hannibal listened as his Seneschal read the charges from the complainant. The woman, Ms. Freddie Lounds, was charging Mr. Will Graham, incubus demon, of mind trickery and nonconsensual sexual activities. She was demanding compensatory damages in the amount of $100,000 from Will and lifetime protection from Hannibal's court.

"She's lying," Will said, crossing his arms and standing his ground. "In fact, I'm counter suing her because she videotaped our encounter without my permission and is threatening to sell it to porn sites."

"I only videotaped it because I wanted to protect myself in case you ended up taking more than I gave you," she said, calmly. "And I'm only going to sell it to an adult video platform because people need to know how an incubus demon uses his powers to seduce innocent people."

"Innocent!" Will said, laughing loudly. "Are you seriously calling yourself innocent?"

She blinked at him, her red lips pursed sadly. "You took advantage of me."

"You took advantage of **me** and filmed me without my consent. And considering that you faked the whole time, Freddie, it was a pretty lousy feeding," Will said, meanly. "Trust me, I'm a sex demon, I can tell when someone's faking it."

Freddie huffed indignantly and then took a deep breath--

“Enough,” Hannibal said, sitting in his chair, crossing his legs. “There is one clear way to determine the truth of this matter. I will read you both. Come closer.”

Will rolled his eyes, but dropped his arms and stepped towards Hannibal. Freddie, on the other hand, looked doubtful and wary, her blue eyes widening as Hannibal beckoned her to the kneeling pillows in front of him.

“Is there a problem, Ms. Lounds?”

“Don’t take this the wrong way but I don’t consent to being read by a vampire. Who knows what else you’ll try to poke around in my head. Or try to enthrall me into being your slave,” she said, narrowing her eyes at him.

Hannibal stared at her for a long moment. “You are quite rude, Ms. Lounds, as you stand in my court, asking for my protection and judgment. What shall we do about this, then? Shall I read Mr. Graham and determine the truth without your version as well. And if I find in favor of Mr. Graham, then you will be held accountable to the counter suit against you, as well as falsely accusing a member of the supernatural community and committing perjury.”

“Or maybe you should just respect a woman’s right to consent without questioning her integrity. Do you think I want to be mind raped a second time? I came here with the hope that you would be able to see reason and you defend this...this disgusting, perverted, sexually deviant demon instead of me?”

Will turned and glared at her. “You weren’t mind raped a first time, Freddie! You know what, show him the uncut version of the video and everyone will see that you set this whole thing up.”

“You’re a sick monster,” she said, tears welling up in her eyes. “Both of you.”

Hannibal already knew that Freddie Lounds was lying; that her scent had changed to fear and anxiousness. She wasn't afraid of them, that particular tang of fear was a bitter, sour scent. Instead, she smelled of old milk and moldy bread, she was afraid to get caught in her lies.

Will knelt down on the kneeling pillow and glared up at Hannibal. "Go ahead, read me, see for yourself."

Hannibal signaled to his Seneschal to keep an eye on Freddie Lounds. He reached down and placed his hand on top of Will's head, feeling the warmth of his skin and the softness of his hair against his palm. He gently touched the pad of his thumb to Will's forehead and stared into Will's beautiful blue-grey eyes, looking into his memories, searching for the moments related to Freddie Lounds.

After a few moments, Hannibal took his hand off of Will, and stared at the human woman.

"I'm very disappointed in you, Ms. Lounds," he said, his voice low and displeased. "Not only have you falsely accused a man of a grievous crime, you would further your campaign against him by causing him embarrassment and public humiliation."

She wore a moue of distaste as she glared up at Hannibal. "You're no better than the rest of your kind."

"And you're a lying, conniving, miserable--"

"William, that is enough!" Hannibal said, sharply, staring at him. "May I finish, please?"

Will waved his hand for Hannibal to continue as he got up from the kneeling pillows, arms crossed in front of him as he glared at Freddie.

“I find in favor of Mr. Graham,” he said, looking to his Seneschal, who nodded, tapping on his tablet. Two court guards approached Freddie, taking her by the arms.

“You won’t get away with this!” She shouted at him as the guards pulled her to the side doors where she would get a chance to consult with a human lawyer on her case.

Will closed his eyes and shook his head, letting out an angry sigh. Hannibal cupped his chin with his hand, looking at the demon thoughtfully. He felt the tingle in his gums as his fangs shifted.

“Thanks,” Will said, brusquely, glancing up at Hannibal. “I never should’ve gotten mixed up with her. Everyone told me that she was bad news.”

“You desired a challenge, which is why you accepted her when she approached you,” Hannibal said, remembering the echo of Will’s feelings and thoughts when he slept with Freddie Lounds.

The act of sex was bland, mediocre and empty, despite Will’s attempts to give her what she wanted. There was no connection between them. It was no better than masturbation with Will fantasizing about a faceless, black shape in order to finish. He could sense Will’s unending hunger and dark cravings after his encounter. It wasn’t the first time that Will was starved. Hannibal was fascinated by Will’s empathy, his ability to know the motivations of others, and he was defenseless against his own self-awareness, which was even sharper focused. Hannibal could see why Bedelia found Will so alluring.

“Finding a suitable partner is too easy for you. You could gorge on the ones who throw themselves at you, but you wish for something more. You don’t feed enough to sustain yourself.”

Will gave him a warning look. “Stay out of my head, Hannibal.”

Hannibal watched as Will walked out of the room, a small smile curling his lips. His Seneschal looked up from his tablet, surprised by Will breaking court protocol and leaving without Hannibal’s dismissal and without a bow.

“He is quite rude, my lord,” his Seneschal said, thoughtfully. “But what does one expect from an incubus demon.”

Hannibal rubbed his finger against his bottom lip, licking the tips of his fangs as they dropped into his mouth.

“Frederick, please add Will Graham to my personal schedule for Thursday nights at seven o’clock. A standing invitation, not an order, for Mr. Graham to attend dinner at my home. Please find out if he has any allergies or special needs. I believe I shall be cooking.”

His Seneschal stared at him in open shock, mouth slightly parted and eyes blinking. Hannibal gave him a look and he quickly nodded, tapping on his tablet to make the new reminder.

“Would you like for me to follow up with Mr. Graham for his RSVP?”

“Yes. Thank you, Frederick.”

“Very good, my lord,” his Seneschal said, pulling up a new screen on his tablet. “The next docket item is in regards to the Vergers. Ms. Margot Verger is the complainant and Mr. Mason Verger is the respondent.”

Hannibal tried to listen as his Seneschal summarized the reasons why the Verger siblings were requesting his support. But all he could do was remember how it felt to walk through Will’s mind, and he spent a few moments building a new wing in his mind palace, specifically to house all of his memories of Will, a variety of new rooms created as Hannibal replayed each moment and interaction with Will Graham.

The incubus demon would taste so *exquisite* .

Chapter 2

Hannibal sighed internally as his Seneschal read Will Graham's name, again, as the Respondent in another claim against him. It had only been two days since Will stepped into his court and the incubus demon was back here again, in front of Hannibal, accused of fraud, mindtrickery, and stealing a priceless artifact from Mr. Franklyn Froideveaux.

However, this was Mr. Froideveaux's tenth time as the Complainant in Hannibal's court - each time the charges were dropped against the Respondent -- and each time Mr. Froideveaux asked for Hannibal's protection by Turning Mr. Froideveaux into a vampire.

Hannibal would rather suffer a Final Death than to add Mr. Froideveaux as one of his immortal children.

Will was dressed in a muted brown sweater, a plaid shirt underneath, and dark brown pants. He looked just as disheveled and displeased as the last time Will stood in Hannibal's court. He looked a little gaunt, as if he hadn't fed enough, but it didn't detract from his beauty. Instead, his hungriness only added to Will's appeal. A sex demon who was on the verge of starving would offer his best efforts to attract and lure someone to feed him sexual energy. Even Hannibal, with his immense self-control, could feel Will's aching need to feed and Hannibal was sympathetic towards him.

"--and furthermore, the incubus demon promised me sexual delights, the likes of which I had never experienced, but all he did was put a glamour on me and stole my dear Grandmother's diamond ring while I was unconscious."

Hannibal continued to gaze at Will, cocking his head curiously. "Mr. Graham, what do you have to say to these charges?"

"First of all, I never promised him 'sexual delights' of any kind. I never even touched him. He started flirting with me at the bar, put his hand on my ass and propositioned me for a completely ludicrous sex act. I politely declined his advances and told him to get away from me. I never had sex with him, I never glamoured him -- and by the way, incubus demons don't do that -- and I never stole anything from him," Will said, dourly.

“How would I remember? He *mindtricked* me into unconsciousness!” Franklyn protested, waving his hands in the air.

“That doesn’t even make any sense,” Will muttered under his breath.

“There is one way to determine the truth of the matter,” Hannibal said, crossing his legs and placing his hands on his knees. “I shall have to read you both. Come closer.”

“Fine,” Will said, taking off his brown framed glasses and walking towards the kneeling pillow, dropping down on his knees in front of Hannibal. “Let’s get it over with.”

“Thank you for your easy compliance, Mr. Graham. Just one moment.”

Hannibal regarded Mr. Froideveaux’s pale face, his plump cheeks turning a deep crimson.

“I wonder if people realize that committing perjury is a criminal offense in my court,” Hannibal said, benignly. “It is rare that beings, be they human or supernatural, would take the risk of making false charges, especially since I can easily determine the truth with just a look into the memories of both Accuser and the Accused. Frederick, in the last year, please tell me how many people have made false accusations and how were they charged.”

The Seneschal tapped on his tablet. “Twenty-four false accusations, my lord. All of them are serving anywhere from two months to ten years in federal prisons.”

“Thank you, Frederick.” He said, staring at Mr. Froideveaux. “I shall give you one chance, and one chance only, to check your memory.”

“I--I, oh my, now that I think about it some more, I think I just had too much wine and I may have, um, misinterpreted the whole encounter,” Franklyn muttered, letting out an awkward laugh. “I apologize for, um, even bringing this before you! You know that I have nothing but

total respect and admiration for you, Lord Lecter, and I would never presume to waste your time. It was just a misunderstanding, right, Will?"

Will made a face and looked over his shoulder at Franklyn. The human made a nervous wave with his hand and Will rolled his eyes, turning back to look up at Hannibal. "Are you sure you don't want to read me, just to double check?"

Hannibal felt the edge of his lip twitch with a half smile, but he forced the amusement off his face as he stared down at Will. He rather enjoyed seeing the incubus demon on his knees in front of Hannibal. Twice now; perhaps the third time would be far more of a personal nature.

"And what of the ring?"

Mr. Froideveaux laughed, the sound too loud and too sharp to be authentic. "No, no, no! I'm sure I've just moved it to somewhere else in my house! Probably because of the wine! You know, I love wine. I'm quite a connoisseur of fine wines. In fact, I'm sure that I have a bottle of the finest blood wine in my wine collection. Perhaps I could offer it to you, Lord Lecter, as a gift! For all that you do! For our communities!"

Hannibal narrowed his eyes, glaring at Mr. Froideveaux. As if he would ever accept such a gift from him.

"Frederick, I believe we can close this case."

"Oh yes, please," Franklyn said, nodding his head quickly. "It was just a misunderstanding--"

"A misunderstanding! I was falsely accused! You know he only did it because I turned him down and because I'm just a lowly incubus demon," Will said, hotly. He got to his feet, and in his hurry and anger, slipped on the marble floor so he had to reach out and grab Hannibal's knee to catch his fall.

Mr. Froideveaux made an audible gasp in the silent room.

Will jerked his hand off of Hannibal's knee as if his hand was burned. He blushed, eyes darting all over the room, swallowing hard.

"I'm, uh, I apologize for touching you without your permission," he said, bowing his head and taking a careful step away from Hannibal.

The incubus demon's hand was *so hot* to the touch, even through Hannibal's wool dress pants he could feel the unusual heat of Will's hand. As a vampire, Hannibal was cool to the touch, and it was only if he gorged himself fully on fresh human blood that his body temperature rose to an average human temperature. How delicious it would be to feel Will's hot flesh against his own cool body? What a torturous delight it would be if Hannibal was to place his fingers or his tongue or his cock into Will's hot flesh; to put his fangs into Will's delectable neck and taste his demon blood as well as his pleasure and pain.

Hannibal chided himself, feeling quite ridiculous, fantasizing and fetishizing the demon.

"Apology accepted," Hannibal said, kindly. "I know that it was an accident."

He watched as Will nodded, moving further away and standing with his head down, a sense of defeat and exhaustion emanating from the incubus demon.

"Mr. Graham is correct. He has been falsely accused despite the fact that Mr. Froideveaux rescinded his claim against Mr. Graham. Frederick, have Mr. Froideveaux escorted to the human attorney's chambers. I feel that the appropriate punishment is three days in a low security facility, 3,000 hours of community service, and a full psychological evaluation."

"Psychological evaluation!" Franklyn said, his tone rising in protest. "But, my lord! I don't believe I need--"

“Mr. Froideveaux, this is now the tenth time you have made claims in my court. I fear that your obsessive behavior should receive the benefit of appropriate therapy.”

“Oh! Well, since you are a licensed psychiatrist, perhaps I could request your services?”

Hannibal gave him a very hard smile. “I have retired from private practice. Frederick, please proceed.”

“Yes, my lord,” the Seneschal said, making a note on his tablet. He signaled to the court guards to take Mr. Froideveaux out of the room.

Hannibal closed his eyes, listening to the human weeping as the guards led him away. He cocked his head, inhaling slightly, his eyebrows furrowing at the most interesting scent. He opened his eyes to look around the room, wondering what it was. It smelled like freshly cut grass on a warm summer day; he followed the scent into his mind palace, enraptured by the soft tinkling of Mischa’s laughter.

Will cleared his throat, putting his eyeglasses back on. “Am I excused to go?”

Hannibal looked at him for a long moment, watching as the incubus demon fidgeted his hands showing his nerves. He realized that the scent was coming from the demon. Hannibal was intrigued.

“Mr. Graham, this is the second time this week that you have found your way to my court, falsely accused yet again,” Hannibal said, keeping his voice low and even.

“Look, it’s no secret that demons like me are going to be accused of all kinds of stuff,” Will said, staring at Hannibal.

“Perhaps I shall take a greater interest in the demon community to see if I can help repair any miscarriage of justice.”

“Why? You never cared to before,” he said, shrugging. “Anyway, thank you for your help. Again. I’m sure this won’t be the last time I have to come to court.”

He offered a slight bow and then turned, walking towards the main doors at the other end of the room. Hannibal enjoyed watching him; he was a curious being. Hannibal had never met anyone quite like him, demon or no.

“Well, at least his manners have improved somewhat,” the Seneschal said, his lips curled into a small smile. “I must say, my lord, that he has a lot of...spirit.”

“Did you send my dinner invitation to Mr. Graham?”

“Yes, my lord,” he said, turning to grin up at Hannibal. “I sent it with our courier to be hand delivered to Mr. Graham.”

“And what was his response?”

“According to the courier, Mr. Graham rolled his eyes and threw the invitation on the front porch of his house, then slammed the door in the courier’s face. But before the courier could leave, Mr. Graham opened the door and then gave the courier ten dollars as a gratuity.”

Hannibal chuckled, smoothing down the fabric of his dress pants with his fingers. “Am I to interpret Mr. Graham’s answer as a yes or as a no?”

“No idea, my lord,” the Seneschal said, chuckling softly. “But I will personally follow up with Mr. Graham before Thursday night.”

“Thank you, Frederick,” he said, feeling quite amused and pleased. “How many more do we have on the docket for today?”

“Just three more, my lord,” he said, checking his tablet. “They are nothing alarming, but definitely worthy of your attention.”

Hannibal nodded. “Let us proceed. Call the next claim.”

***

He poured himself a glass of blood wine, the vintage belonged to a lovely young woman, just turned nineteen, virginal and pure. Hannibal saved the *2012 Chateau Antoinette* for only special occasions as he had only five bottles left. He set the crystal glass next to a small candle, the heat of the candle providing a lovely warm scent of the wine to bloom in the air. He inhaled the richness of it, enjoying both the wine and the music of harpsichord under his experienced fingers.

In the many centuries of his existence, Hannibal had owned many instruments, but he preferred the sound and feel of the harpsichord. There was no way to control the loudness of the plucked strings, allowing the listener to simply enjoy the music as it was, whole and sudden. He had fallen quite in love with this particular harpsichord a century ago, an 18th century Flemish model, just four still in existence. Hannibal now owned three, secreted away in his other residences, and he was always looking for the last one. When the third one came up for sale at Sotheby’s in New York, Hannibal knew he would purchase it for any price. However, he would never be able to privately own the harpsichord that he truly desired -- the 1745 Dulkin which belonged to the Smithsonian -- so the Flemish instrument was the next best thing. Hannibal never regretted his musical indulgences.

He was working on his latest composition, playfully named the *Lecter Variations Rondo in D Minor* , and he was on the cusp of finding the perfect ending. He continued to play a few different melodies, trying to find the one that would inspire him towards the final key, and he smiled to himself, completely lost in his otherworldly pleasures.

“That is the face of a man who is very pleased with himself.”

Hannibal inhaled gently, lips curving into a smile. He opened his eyes to gaze at the lovely human woman walking into his living room.

“Alana.”

She leaned against the side of the harpsichord, grinning. Hannibal thought she looked enchanting in her dark blue dress, her long black hair brushed into perfect waves. She was in her early 30s, at the prime of her life, and Hannibal wanted to Turn her. He would be proud to have her as his next childe; he would be so pleased to be able to offer her protection and wealth and privilege as one of his bloodline. She would be a shining example of the perfect vampire. Perhaps he could play to her vanity and mortality to persuade her to join him. He would get to forever enjoy her immortal company and her keen mind for years to come.

He continued playing a series of musical notes and gazed at her. “I know I promised to limit the number of times I ask you if you would like to be Turned, but when I see you like this, I cannot prevent myself for wanting to ask again.”

“I’m flattered, Hannibal,” she said, softly. “And I do sometimes think about accepting your offer, but a part of me believes that it is knowing that there is an end to my mortal life that keeps me wanting to live.”

“Human life is so short,” he said, agreeably. “I rather think it is a shame that some mortal lives end far too soon.”

“I think I like the idea of immortality. I’ve romanticized it in my head. But I know that I don’t think that I want to remain like this forever, endlessly living and always having to find the next goal, the next goal, and the next one. It just sounds exhausting.”

“We shall sleep when we are dead.”

She chuckled, shaking her head. “What has you in such a mood?”

He stopped playing and sat on the bench, furrowing his brow. “Tell me, my dear, but have I been unduly prejudiced against certain supernatural or human communities under my protection?”

Alana curled her lips under her teeth and then sighed, giving him a compassionate smile. “I believe so. I think there are certain supernatural communities that you favor less than others.”

He nodded, accepting her gentle censure. “It has been brought to my attention recently that I have been unfair to the demon community; that my personal prejudices against them have caused hardship on their kind.”

“Do you mean Will?”

Hannibal flicked his eyes to her, frowning slightly. “How are you acquainted with Will? We are speaking of Will Graham, the incubus demon?”

“He’s a friend of mine.”

“I was not aware that you and he were friends.”

Alana chuckled. “Well, I do have other friends than you, Hannibal. I don’t like to talk about him.” She gave him a rueful look. “Maybe I just want everyone to leave him alone.”

“Of course,” he said, smiling at her. “I’m merely curious as to how you and he know each other. I don’t imagine that you run in the same social circles.”

“Don’t be elitist,” she said, playfully slapping his shoulder and sitting next to him on the bench. “Will is a professor at George Washington. But because he’s a demon class, he’s not eligible for tenure, even though he’s one of the best minds in academia. We’re colleagues and friends. He’s not very sociable and he’s a bit of a loner, but he’s a good person. He cares about supernatural beings having the same rights as humans. He teaches a supernatural social justice course that’s always packed and always has the longest waiting list.”

Alana pecked at the keys of the harpsichord, playing a simple version of chopsticks. Hannibal hadn’t considered that Will Graham had a job, let alone one as a professor. He could see now

that it was a good fit for the demon, and he was now a little irritated that he wouldn't be invited to be a tenured professor because of his demon class.

"I've only met him a handful of times," Hannibal said, softly.

"And you just never asked him anything personal?" She said, giving him a sidelong look. "Just assumed that because he was an incubus demon that he was just out there offering an exchange of sex to feed himself."

"To be honest, I hadn't even considered it."

"Will's had it tough, growing up an incubus demon, having to deal with people's preconceived beliefs and prejudices about his kind. He's got a lot of walls built up. We've worked together for ten years now and it's only been the last couple of years that he's let me be his friend."

"Have you and he…"

Alana laughed, incredulously. "Have we what? Had sex? Has he fed from me? Oh god, Hannibal, that's a horrible question to ask. It's a little rude."

He offered an apologetic smile and ducked his head. "I apologize."

"I think that it was something we might have considered, but that was long in the past, and we're friends now," she said, grinning at him. "I don't really think I'm his type."

Hannibal gave her a look of disbelief.

"From what I understand, Will *prefers* supernatural beings," she said, blushing slightly.

“Ah.”

“He talks about you quite a lot,” Alana confessed, lowering her voice. “Though it’s nothing I’d repeat.”

He gave her an amused look. “I would not ask you to break a confidence. I believe I already know what he would say.”

Alana tilted her head and looked at him closely. “He did mention that you’ve invited him to your home for dinner tomorrow night. He thought it was kind of weird because you wouldn’t need to eat food. I don’t believe he considers your invitation to be serious.”

“It is quite serious. I would like to get to know him.”

She took a deep breath and turned to look at him. “Hannibal, I know that you become enamored with certain people, like a flavor of the month, and it’s brilliant to be within your circle. But flavors fade in the end and...it can be cold outside of your warmth.”

He looked at her for a long moment. “Do you fear that you would be someone who could ever lose my regard?”

“You once said that once your regard is lost, it is lost forever,” she said, giving him a small smile. “For a vampire, forever is a long time.”

Hannibal couldn’t help the small chuckle and he placed a comforting hand on her shoulder, feeling the warmth of her mortality under his palm. “You will always have my friendship, Alana.”

***

Hannibal enjoyed crafting meals for others. He liked the whole process of it from shopping for the freshest organic vegetables and fruits, to finding the perfect cut of meat, to using the most appropriate recipe, and displaying the food like a work of art. Before Hannibal's First Death, he had spent long hours in the warm kitchens of his ancestral home, watching as the cooks for his family prepared meals. Blood was always drained from animals and kept fresh in cold jars; Hannibal learned how to butcher when he was just a boy. He learned how nothing was ever wasted, that every part of an animal had a purpose.

He didn't need to eat human food as a vampire, though there were times when the primal urge took him to go into the night and hunt down and kill live game. He would find the largest buck, tracking it through the woods, until he could bring it down with his fangs and claws, ripping the neck open to drink down all of its blood to the point where he was too full, his senses on overload. He was more creature than man, tearing into the chest to pull out the heart, and eating the raw, bloody flesh in just a few bites.

He missed his two children; perhaps he could find time for when the three of them could meet and go on a hunt together. It had been decades since they last communed together and shared a hunt.

Checking the clock to see that Will should arrive in less than 15 minutes, Hannibal finalized the meal he had prepared for the demon, using his sense of smell and touch to determine its readiness.

The doorbell chimed and he grinned, wiping his hands clean and walking towards the front door. He opened it to greet the demon.

"Will, I'm so glad you're here. Please, come in."

Will ducked his head and nervously brushed back his hair, nodding. "Thanks for the, um, invite. My lord."

Hannibal laughed softly. "We don't need formalities tonight, Will. Tonight, we can share a meal together as friends."

Will looked at him with an odd expression on his face, his eyebrows furrowed together. “Okay, I guess. Han--Hannibal.”

“Is this for me?” He said, looking at the dark bottle in Will’s hand.

“Oh! Right. Yes,” Will said, handing the bottle to Hannibal. “I was kind of a hurry to get here on time so I don’t know if this is a good vintage or not. The guy in the store said that it was popular with vampires.”

Hannibal turned the bottle over to read the label. It was a blood wine, a *2019 Beaujolais* , freshly bottled and unaged. He smiled at Will, watching the nervous twitches of the incubus demon.

“Thank you, Will. I’m sure I’ll enjoy it. Would you like to come into the dining room and have a seat?”

The large 12-seat dining table was set for two, but only Will’s place had all of the necessary place settings. Hannibal’s place a black linen place mat, a freshly ironed black linen napkin, and three crystal glasses, denoting that there would be three courses.

“It’s, um, very nice,” Will said, looking around at the dining room, his blue eyes flickering from the table to the herb garden and the artwork. He sat down and blinked, gazing up at Hannibal.

“I’ll be just a moment,” Hannibal said, walking into the kitchen to begin plating the first course. He had already decanted the blood wine for his own meal, but then decided to open the *Beaujolais* that Will brought to honor his gift.

He carried a silver tray into the dining room, setting it down beside him, and served Will first. “My Seneschal reported that you didn’t have any food allergies and didn’t have any food preferences, so I thought you might enjoy one of my favorite dishes.”

The uni was a bright golden yellow, the highest grade sea urchin that Hannibal could find, and he had plated it on a bed of fragrant balsamic rice and roasted asparagus on the side. Will looked at it for a long moment and then gave it a quick whiff.

Hannibal sat down across from him and poured himself a glass of the Beaujolais as his starter. “No need to stand on ceremony, Will, please eat. I would like to know what you think of it.”

Will placed his napkin on his lap and picked up a fork, using the silver tines to cut away a small piece. He slipped it into his mouth and chewed slowly, looking at Hannibal. “A bit salty. It has a really odd texture, but the flavor is pretty intense.”

He swirled the blood wine in his glass and raised it to his nose, inhaling deeply. The vintage was definitely older, not as pure as the blood wines Hannibal preferred, but delicious as an appetizer. The taste was quite good, though, freshly and made up of citrus notes. He smiled at Will, setting his glass down in front of him.

“I hadn’t realized that we have a mutual friend,” Hannibal said, his eyes tracing the way that Will’s dark curls were tamed down by hair product. He rather liked it when Will’s hair was riotous and unruly.

“No reason for you to know,” Will said, taking small bites of his food. “You and I don’t run in the same social circles. And Alana’s smart enough not to flaunt her friendship with someone like me.”

That made Hannibal frown. “Do you always disparage your own kind?”

“Better that I do it first than be blindsided by someone else,” Will said, the edge of his lips curling into a smirk. “I learned that lesson when I was just a youngling demon.” He took a sip of his water and looked down at his plate. “This was really good. I love seafood, eat it all the time, but I haven’t had uni before.”

Hannibal smiled, feeling an odd sort of pride at being able to provide for Will. “If you enjoyed that, then I think you will enjoy the next course.”

He appreciated that Will ate his meal quietly, soft tinkle of silverware against the porcelain plate. Hannibal was of the belief that good table manners, especially at a vampire's dinner table, was a sign of respect. It was clear to him that Will wasn't used to fine dining, that he was exceptionally nervous, but the fact that he appreciated Hannibal's food raised him in Hannibal's favor.

"So...why did you invite me for dinner? I mean, thank you for the invite and all, I'm not ungrateful enough to refuse a wonderful meal. But I'm having a hard time trying to figure out why you want me here."

"Like most immortals of my age, I've lived through centuries of life and yet I've not grown as a living being. I've harbored a great deal of prejudice for the demon classes and thought that it was time I set aside my pride to attempt to know you better."

Will barked out a sharp laugh. "You want to be my friend."

Hannibal smiled, inclining his head with an affirmation.

"Why? Don't you have enough friends to amuse you?"

"Of course. But one can always gain new friendships."

Hannibal watched as Will considered that, finishing up his appetizer with neat bites.

"What do you want from me, Hannibal?"

"As an incubus demon, you must feed on sexual energy in order to live. However, I can see that you're nearly starving," Hannibal said, lightly. "Why haven't you fed enough?"

“Right, because it’s that easy,” he said, ruefully. “This week alone, I’ve been accused of mind tricks and sexual predation simply because of my nature. People have romanticized and fetishized being a sex class demon. They think we just walk around and exude sex and take what we want. No sex class demon would dare. We’re afraid of the accusations against us. I was lucky because I was born a male sex demon. My female counterparts are often sexually abused without any legal recourse. ‘ *Oh well, she’s a sex demon, she was just asking for it* ’ and ‘ *all succubbi are whores* ’ and here’s the classic, ‘ *it’s not rape because a succubi would never say no to sex* .’”

Hannibal fingers snapped the delicate stem of his crystal glass, the building fury inside of him released.

Will blinked, sitting back in his chair quickly, frowning deeply at Hannibal. His hand slipped towards the knife, fingers curling over the handle in case he needed to defend himself.

“I apologize,” he said, quickly, staring at the broken glass. It was his favorite set and now it would be an incomplete one. “My emotions got away from me. Please know that my anger was not directed at you, Will.”

He used his napkin to wipe up the small amount of blood wine that spilled over the black linen place mat. At least he would be able to salvage it later with a good soaking. He hid the bloody napkin in the folds of the place mat, setting it aside with the broken pieces of the glass.

“The suicide rate for a succubus demon is five times greater than any other living being,” Will said, taking a deep breath. “In one more generation, the succubi demon class will be less than 100 worldwide, and will be extinct in 75 years because female demons are too afraid to procreate, afraid to bring any more succubi children into this world. So, excuse me if I look starved to you and that I don’t feed regularly. We subsist in this world, we don’t get to live in it like the rest of you.”

Hannibal hadn’t felt quite this chastened since before his First Death. “Alana said that your supernatural social justice class is one of the best at the university. Your passion for justice is quite... *persuasive* .”

“Doesn’t do a lot of good when those in charge won’t do anything to change the world,” he said bitterly.

“Is that what you want to do, Will? Change the world?”

Will laughed, shaking his head. “My goals aren’t that lofty. I’m just trying to get through the week without another claim against me.”

Hannibal gave him a small smile, then got to his feet. He took Will’s empty plate and the linen place mat, picking up the tray. “I believe it’s time for the second course. I shall return in a moment.”

He set the tray down on the counter and took a moment to calm himself. The blood wine gave him just enough blood to feel his cold heart pump with blood, feeling his body flush with emotion. Will’s censure went deeper than the demon probably knew, and Hannibal vowed to do something about re-balancing the supernatural community as he was the only one with the power, influence, and wealth to do so. Once Hannibal made a promise, he kept it. Perhaps Will wasn’t ready to know that he had changed Hannibal, but Will would surely be credited for it.

The second course, the main entre, was a beautifully cooked catfish. Hannibal knew that Will was originally from Louisiana and he wanted to present Will with a small taste of home. Homemade sweet potato fries and slaw were the perfect accompaniment. He plated the food to his aesthetic, but the meal was more comfort food than fine dining.

He returned to the dining room and found that Will was also calmer and he smiled widely as Hannibal set the plate in front of him.

“I haven’t had catfish in years,” he said, smiling up at Hannibal.

“Then I hope it meets your standards. *Bon appetit.* ”

Will let out a soft laugh. “My standards aren’t that high. If it’s edible, I’ll probably eat it.” He took a bite of the fish and let out a heartfelt groan. “Wow, that’s really delicious.”

Hannibal was glad that there was a table between them. There was enough blood in his system to fill his cock, feeling it engorge and press against his dress pants. He poured himself a glass of a more robust blood wine and sipped it carefully as he watched Will lose himself in his clear enjoyment of the food.

“I did have an ulterior motive for inviting you to my home tonight,” Hannibal said, setting his glass down on the table.

Will looked up, his mouth closing around the forkful of fish, and he chewed slowly, nodding for Hannibal to continue.

“I am...chastised for my poor behavior as the vampire king of this region. I’ve been negligent and unthinking of my role as the leader of the supernatural community. It is my plan to make amends and change that. I would like to invite you to act as my advisor. I believe that your empathy to our kind, to all of the classes, will benefit us all.”

He watched as Will wiped his lips with the napkin, sitting back and staring at him in disbelief.

“That’s...not what I was expecting.”

“Nor I,” he said, feeling his lips curl into a smile. “But you’ve started a change in me and I thank you for it.”

“ *Uh-huh* ,” Will murmured, doubt in his tone. “Well, uh, I’m happy to help where I can. I mean, I can probably give you a day or two during the week when I’m not teaching.”

“Thank you. My Seneschal will work with you on your schedule and align the best time for us to meet.” Hannibal took another sip of his blood wine and gazed at Will. “I would also like

to offer you a second proposal, somewhat more personal."

Will grinned, raising his eyebrows. "Okay, with a lead in like that, I'll bite."

"I would like to offer you my services to feed you."

Will made a quizzical expression, tilting his head to the side. "You mean like...cook me meals?"

"I mean, I would like to *feed* you until you are *sated* ."

Will dropped his fork on his plate, his eyes wide in shock, mouth parting and falling open. He blinked several times and then swallowed so hard that his Adam's apple bobbed in his throat. Hannibal's eyes dropped to that tender, pale throat, sensing the blood rushing through Will's body.

"You, uh, realize that I feed off of **sexual** energy…"

"Yes, I am aware."

" **Sex** ," he said, waving his hand between the two of them. "Us."

"I think we could benefit each other," Hannibal said, smiling. "I require fresh blood in order for my body to...become active. I would take a small amount of your blood and you would take as much energy as you require from me. I would see you fed and healthy."

Will stared at him for a long moment, jaw clenched, his hand rising to touch his neck anxiously. "Do I...do I need to give you my answer right now?"

"Of course not," he said, amiably. "I know you have much to consider. Please believe me that my request for you to be my advisor is not contingent on my offer of a more personal

exchange. I would not take advantage of you, Will, or force you into a position of obligation."

"Just, uh, give me a few days to think it over."

"Take all the time you need," he said, feeling his mouth salivate and his fangs throb under his gums. He picked up his glass and closed his eyes, inhaling the scent of the blood wine. He was certain that if Will granted his request, his blood would taste finer than any Hannibal had tasted before.

He opened his eyes to see Will watching him, his cheeks flushed a deep ruddy shade. It would be rude to scent Will, there would be time enough for that, but he could sense Will's arousal from across the table.

Hannibal offered a charming smile. "Are you ready for dessert?"

Chapter 3

Being the Vampire King of Supernatural Beings of America, Emperor of Europe and Asia, left little time for Hannibal to indulge in his other esoteric hobbies. He was a collector of the macabre, particularly torture devices and implements throughout human and supernatural history. The more grotesque it was, the more sublime Hannibal found it to be. There were some torture devices that he had developed himself, centuries ago, when he slaked his bloodlust on lesser beings, tormenting them without mercy. He found humans to be, ultimately, too frail to survive his tortures and he soon tired of their short-lived suffering. So he turned his eyes towards the supernatural, his sadistic urges and his curiosity limitless. One of his most memorable tortures was when he captured a beautiful fairy, a young male with the bluest eyes and whitest hair, and kept him alive in an amber filled tank. The fairy was alive, forever trapped inside the amber, a living monument to Hannibal's grand guignol.

He was certain that the amber tank was still in the dungeons of his castle outside of London, where Francis kept a dutiful eye on Europe's supernatural community as Hannibal's Regent. He wondered if Francis had found it and if he went down to the dungeons to visit the boy. It was all too easy to fall in love with an immortal caught in the cusp of his eternal suffering. There was perfection in being able to see such pain, and some days, Hannibal longed to create a new collection in Baltimore.

Best not, Hannibal thought, as he gazed at the werewolf presented to his court. Werewolves were loyal companions for vampires and other supernatural beings. They believed all supernatural beings were part of their pack and their diligence in protecting and nurturing pack members, sometimes extending to humans, formed the foundation of their service. Hannibal would never be able to return to the old ways when he ruled with blood and pain; if he did, he would have to kill the entire pack else the werewolves would turn on him and rip him to pieces.

"My name is Miriam Lass. I'm just a trainee, but I'm sure that I can serve House Lecter with distinction," the young woman said as she made a formal bow. Her handsome face was stoic under Hannibal's critical regard.

"Never just a trainee," he said, smiling at her. "Even a house protector-in-training is a highly sought after position."

When Jack Crawford, the head of the Baltimore werewolf pack, contacted Frederick that he had trained a replacement for Randall to serve in Hannibal's household, Hannibal was delighted by the news. Ever since Randall left to work for Bedelia, Hannibal had felt the loss of his constant presence in his great house. A house such as his should be filled with life and the activities of living beings. And it was a given that Randall had such knowledge of everything inside Hannibal's house, he missed the werewolf's ability to find, at a moment's notice, anything that Hannibal desired. Replacing Randall would be quite the challenge.

Miriam Lass stood in front of Hannibal, her long dirty blonde hair tied up in a severe ponytail. For someone so young, she carried herself with the gravitas of older, wiser werewolves. He felt that it was part of their nature and Hannibal appreciated their solemnity. She was dressed in a frumpy black suit, her shirt the deep red of the Baltimore pack. Hannibal would ensure that she was properly outfitted to represent House Lecter. She was of average height for a female werewolf, but it was her eyes that intrigued Hannibal. There was intelligence there, but also a hunger for acknowledgement and acceptance. Randall's eyes also held intelligence, but underneath his skin was a brutal animal held under a carefully controlled leash. Hannibal knew that she wanted to prove herself, not just to him but to her pack. Everyone knew of Hannibal's high regard for Randall, and it wouldn't be easy to step into his shoes. But she would do very nicely.

"Frederick, please convey to Mr. Crawford my sincerest gratitude. Miriam Lass is an acceptable member of my household. Please be so kind as to ensure that she has full access to the house and to the calendar so that she may begin her duties immediately," Hannibal said, turning to look at his Seneschal. "And make an appointment with the tailors to outfit her with appropriate clothing, especially her formal wear with the Lecter Crest."

"Yes, my lord," his Seneschal said, bowing his head.

"Welcome to my home, Miriam."

"Thank you, my lord." Miriam bowed again, a formal courtly bow, and Hannibal didn't miss the pleased smile on her lips.

***

Hannibal walked into the library and smiled as Anthony, sprawled on the silk couch, threw the paperback book petulantly across the room, hitting the wall by the fireplace. He regarded the human at length just for the pleasure of it. He was in his 40s now, his once black hair suffused with strands of gray that gave him a distinguished air. He dressed like a well-kept man, covered in the finest fabrics and muted colors in styles that he knew Hannibal liked to see him wear. Today, he was dressed in dark slacks and a white dress shirt, unbuttoned to showcase his long and lean neck. He was as tall as Hannibal and he kept in shape by taking a long run every morning. He still had a bit of a boyish face, but lined with laugh lines around the eyes and mouth. The human was handsome and amusing; a fine companion for Hannibal and a good member of his household.

“Something displease you, my dear?”

Anthony Dimmond sat up and gave Hannibal a rueful smile. “Only that my aim was off. Roman Fell published another book. He’s insufferable, Hannibal!”

Hannibal sat down on the sofa beside him, amused. He had heard Anthony’s diatribes about Roman Fell multiple times.

“Why haven’t you worked on your own writings?”

Anthony gave him a look of disbelief. “Poetry is hard -- and it certainly was too hard for Roman -- but at least I haven’t given up like he has. His books are terrible, such a trite and elementary writing style. It was so much easier for him to slide into academia and dissect the efforts of others than stand by his own poetry.”

Hannibal nodded, remembering a handful of Roman’s earlier works before he turned to literary analysis. They weren’t up to snuff, as they say.

“Maybe you just need proper inspiration,” Hannibal said, reaching out to stroke his fingers down Anthony’s warm neck, touching the dozens of pale scars on his flesh. “I enjoy it when you read me your poetry.”

The human turned and grinned at Hannibal. “You think my poetry is pretentious crap, but I appreciate your patronage.”

Anthony slid closer towards Hannibal, tilting his head and offering more of his neck. No matter how many times someone offered him their neck, he would always feel a certain gratitude. Taking the blood of a voluntary donor not only fed Hannibal, but it also fed other needs, the primal needs. Hannibal felt his fangs slip down into his mouth, his gums aching with delicious sensations.

“One can appreciate another’s words without dissecting them,” he murmured, pressing his mouth against Anthony’s warmth, biting slowly down into his neck. He bit deeper than usual, wanting to feel Anthony shudder against him, struggle through the extra pain that Hannibal inflicted on him.

Anthony closed his eyes and moaned throatily, exhaling slowly as Hannibal extracted his fangs, sucking deeply on the opened holes, savoring the taste of Anthony’s blood. In the 15 years that Anthony served as Hannibal’s live-in blood donor, Hannibal had tasted the changes in the human as he aged, his blood now a fine vintage flavor that still appealed to Hannibal’s palate, even after so much time together. He knew that Anthony enjoyed his position, not just in his household, but also in the community. And he knew that Hannibal would ensure his livelihood when Anthony became too old to have blood taken from him regularly; eventually, all of Hannibal’s live-in blood donors aged out at some point. As the current favorite, Hannibal didn’t want to deny him anything, his long years of generous service and access to his blood, his body, and his mind exceptionally fulfilling for Hannibal. He liked Anthony, despite his oftentimes pretentious poetry and immature jealousy towards published writers, and would continue his patronage long after Anthony left his service.

He lapped the blood oozing out of the holes, his saliva healing and closing the openings, leaving behind a dark bruise. Hannibal enjoyed leaving his marks and seeing them displayed. Anthony was inordinately proud of the marks on his neck - not to mention the more intimate marks that Hannibal left on his body, especially on his inner thighs - and wore expensively made linen or silk shirts, unbuttoned just so that anyone could see the marks.

“ *Hmmmm* ...you were hungrier than usual,” Anthony murmured, looking up at Hannibal sleepily, his blue eyes glazed from pleasure. His hand caressed Hannibal’s chest. “You sure you wouldn’t like to have something more?”

“Perhaps later,” he said, pressing a soft kiss to Anthony’s forehead. “I must attend to my business.”

“Shame,” Anthony said, smiling slowly. “I admit that I rather enjoy it when you fuck me when I’m like this.”

Hannibal chuckled, dragging the pad of his thumb along Anthony’s bottom lip. “I enjoy it, too. I shall have to visit you this evening. Make sure that Jimmy provides you with a hearty meal today. I wouldn’t want to drain you so much that you wouldn’t be able to enjoy our time together as well.”

Anthony chuckled. “I’ll make sure to take my vitamin supplements, too.”

Hannibal smiled, feeling full and rather fond, and got to his feet, smoothing down any wrinkles on his clothes. “Then I’ll see you tonight.”

***

Hannibal kept a small private staff to manage his household. As vampire king, his home was large enough and sometimes more convenient to use as a meeting place for his court staff. Frederick Chilton, his trusted Seneschal, had taken over one of the rooms as his office, and could be found in the house managing Hannibal’s official court business. Even though Hannibal had an official space for his “court” days that was full of pomp and circumstance, it was common for people to ask to meet with Hannibal at his home. Some meetings were better off conducted in a more private setting.

Aside from the recent addition of Miriam to his household and Anthony’s more personal role, Hannibal kept only two personal servants. Jimmy Price was a water sprite and acted as Hannibal’s butler and valet. When he wasn’t luxuriating in his large bathtub, Jimmy chased after Hannibal and arranged for the smooth running of his house. Because of the supernatural and human guests in the house, Jimmy kept the kitchen and pantry well stocked with food and other edibles.

Jimmy's long-term partner was a human named Brian Zeller, who worked on the gardens and landscaping. The two had met when Hannibal hired Brian's services. He had worked wonders on the herb gardens, everything blooming beautifully throughout the seasons. But it was when he rejuvenated the flower gardens that caught Jimmy's eye. The older water sprite spent more time indoors than he did outdoors, and his duties for Hannibal kept him too busy to work on his flower gardens. Hannibal knew that Jimmy was considering draining the small water pond since Hannibal had a custom bathtub installed in Jimmy's personal quarters, but then Brian performed feats of magic and turned Hannibal's grounds into an enviable paradise. Hannibal may not spend his daylight hours outdoors, he had enjoyed Brian's beautiful work under the moonlight. He was certain that Brian had some latent magical powers despite the fact that he was very much human.

So when Jimmy made an off-hand comment that it would be easier if Brian had a room at the house, Hannibal considered Jimmy's words and performed a service for his loyal servant.

It was no hardship for Hannibal to ask his Seneschal to do a full background check on Brian and his family lineage, with everything coming up clear, and to ask Brian to work for Hannibal full-time. The human agreed quickly, and two days later, had moved into Jimmy's personal quarters. Hannibal asked his Seneschal to have a small cottage built on his property, to give Brian a place to house his tools and a private space of his own. Jimmy and Brian were thick as thieves, cavorting together in the cottage or in the pond, and never had Hannibal's home and his lands run so smoothly as they did under their careful attention.

***

The rest of Hannibal's week was relatively quiet. He was a little disappointed that Will wasn't back in his court. He wondered when Will would give him an answer to his proposition, and wasn't surprised when the surly demon merely sent Hannibal a brief text message.

Will: Okay I accept your proposition

Hannibal: Wonderful. Are you adequately fed until next Thursday or do you require sustenance sooner?

Will: I'm fine we can meet Thursday at the same time

Hannibal: Please bring an overnight bag. I shall have the guest room prepared for you in case you would like to recuperate after you feed.

Will: Okay thanks

Hannibal made a face, standing in his kitchen as he read through their messages again, and sipped his blood wine.

“Jimmy, please prepare the guest room for Will Graham. He will be staying the night on Thursday evening.”

Jimmy looked up from where he was taking inventory of the refrigerator. “Is he a human guest or a supernatural guest?”

“Will Graham is an incubus demon.”

Jimmy smiled, giving Hannibal a knowing look. “Incubus, huh? Well...sure. I can set up the blue guest room. Are you planning to cook dinner for him again?”

“Yes,” he said, setting his phone on the nearby kitchen island. “I would like to provide him with a hearty meal, perhaps a wagyu steak, the best cut you can purchase from the butcher.”

“Okay, I’ll pick up some fresh veggies, too,” the water sprite said, smiling widely as he opened the vegetable drawers, taking a look inside. “Are you going to tell Tony?”

Hannibal frowned, tapping his fingers on the counter. “Do you believe that I should?”

Jimmy closed the refrigerator door and turned to look at Hannibal. “I think that he deserves a little courtesy, don’t you?”

He nodded and then offered Jimmy a small smile. “As always, you are correct. It would be callous of me to ignore Anthony’s role in my life. He has no need to be concerned that I would ever replace him with another. And it would be rude of me for Anthony to discover Will’s presence in the house without a word from me. Thank you, Jimmy.”

The water sprite smiled, nodding his approval. “I’m going to turn in. Good night, Hannibal. If you need me, just call.”

“Have a good evening.”

Hannibal finished his glass of blood wine and walked to the sink, washing the glass and drying it with a clean towel. He detested water spots on his glassware and demanded perfection on maintaining crystal clear glasses. Jimmy always did such a good job ensuring that all the stemware in the house was shined and glittering.

He considered Jimmy’s advice, curious to see Anthony’s reaction to Will. Would he be jealous and react badly, cruel in his pettiness towards Will? Or was he so jaded now that it wouldn’t make a difference, secure in the knowledge that Hannibal would take care of him for the rest of his mortal life? Hannibal thought he knew Anthony’s reaction, but he would be quite entertained to witness it happen. Will, however, was unpredictable. He didn’t know the incubus demon well enough to properly gauge what his reaction would be towards Anthony. Perhaps Will would find Anthony’s jealousy and pettiness to be amusing? As a sex demon, no doubt that Will was the target of jealousy. Hannibal smiled, folding the towel neatly and setting it on the counter by the sink. No, Will would not be concerned by Anthony’s presence or reaction at all. He wouldn’t actually care, either way. Hannibal decided that he was not in the mood for games and the potential drama that would be unleashed in his peaceful home. Jimmy was right, it would be better to talk to Anthony about it first, and reassure the human that the arrangement with Will was only temporary and not a risk to Anthony’s place in Hannibal’s household.

***

“My lord, Special Agent Beverly Katz requests some of your time at your earliest convenience,” his Seneschal said, finding Hannibal in his private study.

He was sketching a portrait of the incubus demon, trying to capture his intelligence and his passionate ire with pencil and charcoal.

“On a Sunday? Do I have time for her today, Frederick?”

“You do, my lord, at 4 o’clock, if you wish it.”

Hannibal paused in his work, his hands touching the smooth grain of the paper. “Did Agent Katz say what was the nature of her visit?”

His Seneschal frowned slightly. “Agent Katz did not want to say over the phone; but I expect that it is an unofficial official visit.”

“Have Jimmy prepare a light meal and refreshments for her in time for her arrival,” Hannibal said, nodding his head at his Seneschal and examining the drawing so far.

“Yes, my lord,” he said, exiting the room quietly.

Hannibal couldn’t figure out what was missing. He had captured Will’s insouciance perfectly, such pride in the stubborn tilt of his chin, but Hannibal hadn’t quite gotten the amused glint in his eyes properly. He didn’t fret; there would be plenty of opportunity to sketch Will.

***

Special Agent Beverly Katz was human, but her good nature, her expertise in forensic investigation, and her keen mind made her an exceptionally interesting human in Hannibal’s estimation.

“Agent Katz, I am glad to meet you again,” he said, warmly. “Please, have a seat.”

He watched as she took the comfortable armchair, the thick folder on her lap. Jimmy had brought a tea service into the study, but holding two teapots. One would hold the Earl Grey tea that Agent Katz favored, the other would hold the blood wine that Hannibal enjoyed best. Jimmy poured their drinks into their cups, gave Agent Katz a warm smile, and bowed politely before leaving the room.

Agent Katz picked up her teacup and saucer, taking a quiet sip, and smiled at Hannibal. “I know it’s unorthodox for me to ask to you meet you here instead of at your office, but I really wanted to pick your brain in an unofficial capacity.”

“Of course. How can I help you?”

She set her cup down and then handed him the thick folder. “I’ve been looking into the murder of a young man, an incubus demon actually, who was tortured, sexually abused, and mutilated. We found his body in an empty field three days ago. There was no trace, no DNA besides his own, no motive, no suspects, no witnesses. I’m at a dead end, Lord Lecter.”

Hannibal opened the folder and perused the reports and crime scene photographs. He pursed his lips and frowned slightly, looking at the young man. He was stunningly beautiful, as sex demon classes were, with a head of wavy brown hair and what was once creamy unmarked skin. It was impossible to deny that he looked like a younger version of Will Graham.

The incubus demon, being young and healthy, had withstood what looked like a great deal of pain. The torture, mutiliation, and abuse the demon received were made by an obvious master, someone who knew just how to make someone suffer.

“Normally, the FBI would work with your Seneschal and partner up with your security team to investigate violent crimes against the supernatural community, but I flagged his murder because something caught my eye,” she said, meeting Hannibal’s gaze. “His glands were removed. While he was still alive.”

Hannibal nodded. “Please, excuse me for one moment, Agent Katz. I would like to invite my Seneschal to sit in on this meeting.”

“Sure,” she said, nodding, and picking up her teacup to take another sip.

“Frederick, I need you,” Hannibal called, stepping out into the hallway.

“Yes, my lord,” his Seneschal responded, stepping out of his office with his tablet in his hand.

“Thank you, Frederick,” he said, inviting his Seneschal into the room. “Agent Katz, please tell us again your findings.”

Hannibal handed him the folder and crossed his legs, folding his hands together on his lap, as Agent Katz told Frederick what she had told him. He watched Frederick’s face for his reaction, moving from professional curiosity to confusion and then fury.

“They cut out his glands?” his Seneschal said, staring at the black and white photograph of the back of the young demon’s neck. His demon gland was neatly removed with near surgical precision. Frederick turned to look at Hannibal. “My lord...I don’t even know what to say.”

“Here’s the thing, guys,” Agent Katz said, staring at them. “That incubus demon isn’t the first victim -- he’s just the first that I flagged. When I went through the recent murders of other supernatural beings, I noticed that four of them had their glands removed, too. It was missed by forensic pathology because they hadn’t seen the pattern. All five victims were autopsied by different med techs so no one put together the connection until now.”

Frederick handed the file back to Hannibal and he opened it, scanning through each report, viewing the photographs of each victim. The male incubus demon with the back of his neck cut open. A witch with her abdomen slashed. A female fairy with her eyes and wings missing. A siren with her tongue and throat excised. A female succubus demon with her chest exposed and heart missing. This was the work of someone, a supernatural being, with expert knowledge of other supernatural beings and the location of their glands.

“Why would anyone want to remove a supernatural being’s glands?” The Seneschal said, sitting back in his chair.

Hannibal remembered that Frederick was still young, only just 92 years old, compared to the centuries that were part of Hannibal's long life. His Seneschal would not be old enough to remember the early days of supernatural kind. And as history books are written by the victors, only a few would know of Hannibal's own dark past. Few existed who were of Hannibal's age.

"In the past, supernatural beings were sacrificed to the Gods to gain power and favor," Hannibal said, closing the folder and setting it on the coffee table between them. "Part of the ritual was the removal of the supernatural being's glands while they were still alive; to prove that the sacrificial gift was pure. It has been centuries since these dark arts were practiced by anyone in today's civilized society."

"Not all that civilized if you ask me," Agent Katz said, dryly. "I've been doing some research into the history of supernatural rituals. Besides just honoring the Gods, people took these glands in order to steal their power."

"There were beliefs that by consuming the glands, a person could gain their powers for a brief amount of time," Hannibal said, nodding. Frederick looked particularly horrified, reaching up to brush his hand on his jaw. No doubt he was thinking of the fangs hidden away in his mouth. "When my family came into power, we abolished the darkest rituals against supernatural beings and the punishments were harsh for those who continued the practice."

"Do you think that someone quite old has returned to recreate these sacrifices?" Frederick said, looking at Hannibal closely.

He smiled, shaking his head. "There are few beings who are older than me."

"Did you do it?" Agent Katz said, her dark brown eyes staring at him.

"Agent Katz!" His Seneschal chided, frowning at her.

“I apologize for my rudeness, but I had to ask,” she said, her eyes never straying from Hannibal.

“Agent Katz, this is not my doing,” he said, truthfully. “I am capable of a great many things, but I have no need of powers as the missing glands suggest, and I would not risk my position as vampire king by murdering any of my kind.”

She stared at him in silence, and then sighed, nodding. “Thank you. Sorry, Lord Lecter, just doing my due diligence.”

“Understandable,” he said, giving her a nod of acceptance. “I would not expect anything less from you.”

“I still need help,” she said, taking a deep breath. “I don’t have any allies in the supernatural community. I don’t even have any jurisdiction, not without a court order anyway. I’ve been trying to convince my bosses that this is a very specific type of serial killer, but they don’t see the problem -- or maybe they just don’t care. My hands are tied, which is why I brought this directly to you.”

“And you have my support and my discretion,” Hannibal said, looking at Frederick. “Until there is a court order, I, too, cannot make any official inquiries, but there are other ways.”

“Just -- nothing illegal, please.”

“Of course not, Agent Katz. Miriam,” he called, turning his head slightly over his right shoulder. He could sense the werewolf as she stepped closer towards them. Agent Katz startled in surprise, not having noticed that there was someone else in the room with them.

“Yes, my lord.”

“Holy -- geez, where did she come from?” Agent Katz said, taking a deep breath.

“Miriam, I would like for you to perform an investigation for me. Please go to Randall and explain to him what you have heard. Frederick, you will contact Bedelia and ask her to release Randall to my service temporarily. Together, Miriam and Randall will check the underground clubs, the traffickers, and those who live on the fringes of society. I want to know of any activities related to these dark rituals, mutilations, and if a new type of drug is moving through the communities. Report your findings only to Frederick and me. Check in with Frederick every 8 hours if you and Randall need additional time on your investigation. Frederick, you’ll keep Agent Katz informed, unofficially, of our progress.”

“Of course, my lord,” his Seneschal said, looking at Agent Katz and nodding his head to her.

“Yes, my lord,” Miriam said, going back into the shadows and using the secret door leading to the narrow hallways built into the house.

Hannibal was pleased; Miriam had studied the multiple blueprints of the house in order to best protect it. If she had found and used the secret passages, then it meant she was able to piece together four sets of blueprints, created in different time periods, in order to find all of the secret doors. He very much wanted to know how Miriam would do on this task. He had no doubts that she would surpass Randall’s skills in this area.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Hot damn! Yes, this is the chapter you've been waiting for. The sex! RAWR! Enjoy it.

When Hannibal opened the front door to greet Will, his smile faded into a small frown at the pale, jittery state of the incubus demon. He looked even more disheveled than usual, his dark curls sticking up in places or sticking to his skin, and his clothes just seemed to hang listlessly off his slender frame. Will wasn't that much shorter than Hannibal, but where Hannibal was healthy and broad and graceful, Will was malnourished and thin and small.

"Will, come inside," Hannibal said, reaching for his arm and pulling him into the house, shutting the door. "You look half starved."

Will attempted a smile, which looked grim and exhausted. "I might have, um, not fed enough this week because I knew I'd be coming here."

"Dinner is ready. I believe you should have a good meal first before we attempt anything else," Hannibal said, bringing him into the dining room and helping Will sit down. "Have some water. I'll be right back."

Hannibal hurried into the kitchen. "Jimmy, I need for you to begin plating the main course now, please, and bring all the courses out as soon as you're ready."

"Should I serve it family style?" He said, blinking at Hannibal in surprise.

"Yes. I will sacrifice the precise timing of each course for haste. Will is starved and I need him fed."

Jimmy nodded, getting to work quickly, as Hannibal picked up the plate of appetizers, a simple omelette, and returned to the dining room.

He set the plate down in front of Will, regarding the demon carefully. “Eat this now, Will.”

“You’ll have to forgive my awful table manners,” Will said, picking up his fork and practically shoveling the food into his mouth. Hannibal sighed, sitting down in his chair across from Will, watching as the incubus demon ate the small omelette in four quick bites. “It’s really good, Hannibal.”

“I dislike seeing you in this condition,” he said, taking a sip of his blood wine.

“Yeah, well, it doesn’t feel all that great either.”

Jimmy stepped into the dining room, holding two plates in his hands. Will moved the small appetizer plate to the side as Jimmy placed them down in front of him. The main course was a perfectly seared steak with a side of seasonal vegetables. The dessert was a flan that looked glossy and appealing.

The water sprite took one look at Will and tsked his concern, refilling the water glass and picking up the empty appetizer plate. “You look pretty rough there. I can tell you haven’t been taking care of yourself.”

“Mr. Price,” Hannibal admonished, a little shocked by Jimmy’s informal comments. It was rare for the water sprite to show any concern for one of Hannibal’s guests, let alone address it so directly.

Will cut into the meat hurriedly, flicking his eyes up to Jimmy with a rueful smile. “It’s all right, Hannibal.”

“Could I get you anything else, Mr. Graham?” Jimmy said, formally.

“No, everything’s good, thank you, Mr. Price.” Will said, chewing on a rather large piece of meat, the juices dribbling down his chin. Hannibal wanted to lick it off his skin.

“Thank you, Jimmy, I can manage the rest of it myself,” Hannibal said, dismissing him politely. “If you could make up the fire in my study before you retire for the evening, I would appreciate it.”

Will was a sickly gray, there was no vibrancy in his coloring, no flush to his cheeks. Even his dark brown hair seemed to droop, a few strands stuck to parts of his forehead where he was sweating. He ate the food like a starved man and Hannibal had just enough empathy to feel Will’s discomfort.

“Have you no regular partners to help you feed?”

Will shook his head, swallowing down the food. “That would require me to socialize...and you already know the consequences of me being in public.”

“If we are to engage in this mutually beneficial partnership, you cannot starve yourself the rest of the week and then feed solely from me,” Hannibal said, softly. At least, not until he had managed to bring Will into his household on a more permanent basis. Then, he could feed from Hannibal as much as he wanted. “I could help you find steady partners who would be discreet and available when you need them.”

Will winced, shaking his head. “Sounds too much like taking advantage.”

“Consider it an exchange, something you and your partners can benefit from. I understand that you have a preference for supernatural partners -- “

“Jesus, Hannibal, do you just spy on me or something?” Will said, perturbed.

He enjoyed Will's petulance; but he didn't want to arouse his anger by telling him that their mutual friend Alana had let Will's preferences slip. Hannibal sipped his blood wine slowly, savoring the taste of it as he gazed coolly at Will. "I apologize for my directness, but you need regular feedings. It would be even more negligent of me to ignore your starvation. Perhaps I could recommend counseling to help you with some of your inner turmoil on feeding."

Will gave him a sharp look, his forkful of meat paused just so. "Don't psychoanalyze me, Hannibal. You won't like the outcome."

"It's merely an observation," he said, smiling to himself as Will resumed eating. "Is it true that you find yourself stalled in your professional career?"

"You've been talking to Alana," Will said, staring at him. "Do you pay her to spy on me and to tell you all of my secrets?"

"Alana is a good friend to us. She would neither spy on you nor break your confidence."

"But she'd tell you about my supernatural preferences and that I'll never gain tenure -- two things that I wouldn't tell just anyone."

"The fault is mine, Will," he said, soothingly. "I was curious about you and when I learned that we have a mutual friend in Alana, I asked her a few questions. Despite my long reach into the supernatural community, I do, on occasion, enjoy a bit of social tête-à-tête ."

Will laughed, his handsome face opening as his smile widened, his lips parted slightly as he threw back his head and let out a loud, unfiltered, throaty sound of mirth. His cheeks blushed with renewed warmth as he gazed at Hannibal. Will's coloring was improving as he ate his dinner. Not only did Hannibal want to feed Will the sexual energy he desperately needed, he found that he wanted to cook for Will and keep him healthy.

"The vampire king likes to gossip, huh?"

Hannibal smiled at him. “I don’t have the luxury of showing favor in public. My Seneschal and members of my personal household keep me informed of the goings on in the supernatural and human communities. And my associates and friends keep me apprised as well. Generally, I despise common gossip and I loathe those who would use it to hurt someone out of petty jealousy; however, informal forms of information from my trusted circle have alerted me to many things that impact both communities.”

Will let out a soft snigger, shaking his head. “I don’t know, Hannibal, still sounds like you were trying to get Alana to tell you all sorts of secrets about me.”

“Rest assured that Alana did not expose you.”

“Yeah, she’s a good friend,” Will said, nodding. “Probably one of my first real friends.”

“And I hope she won’t be your only friend.”

Will cut into the meat, a small smile curving on his lips. “Well, that remains to be seen. Early days and all.”

Hannibal nodded his acceptance. “I have nothing but time.”

He watched as Will laughed again, softer this time, the sound warmer. “So, how’s this going to work between us tonight?”

“After dinner, I’d like to share a nightcap with you in my study,” Hannibal said, gently pressing his fingertips against the wine glass stem as he regarded Will. “With your permission, I’d like to bite you and take a couple of mouthfuls of your blood.” He watched as Will blushed, the blood filling the capillaries under his skin. Hannibal licked his lips. “Have you ever been bitten by a vampire?”

“No,” he said, shaking his head.

“There may be a slight pain at first, when I press my fangs into your skin. But there are chemicals in my saliva that when they enter your bloodstream will act as a mild form of narcotic, much like the serotonin released in your brain to promote a sensation of pleasure.”

“Do you...do you need it to...get *interested* ?”

“No, I’ve taken enough blood today to achieve and hold an erection,” Hannibal said, simply, enjoying the way that Will blushed some more. He was delighted to know that the incubus demon, despite his very nature as a sex demon, would blush due to a simple conversation. “I want to taste you, Will, that alone would bring me great pleasure. I imagine that you’ll enjoy it as well.”

“Then what?”

“Then I’ll ask you to join me in my bedroom; and we’ll spend as much time as we need to fully satisfy your hunger.”

Will picked up his water glass and sipped it slowly. “Nothing *satisfies* my hunger. I’m always hungry...so, you know, don’t think that that’s on you or anything like that.”

Hannibal grinned, feeling his fangs drop. “Let’s see how much you need from me to sate you for tonight.”

***

Jimmy had started a fire in the fireplace as dinner ended, giving the room a warm and orange glow. Will had taken off his jacket and stood in front of the fireplace, gazing unseeingly at the flames, the glass of port in his hand. Hannibal sat in an armchair, his legs crossed, and waited patiently as Will sipped his drink. He didn’t mind the wait, the anticipation of tasting Will growing within him. So he looked his fill of the incubus demon, the shape of his body under his clothes highlighted by the fireplace, the leanness of him, the cinch of his narrow waist, the roundness of his perfect ass -- his nature and genetics creating him to be desirable to all of

the senses. In another time, Will would've been the muse of the master artists, forever capturing his beauty in stone and marble and paint. In another time, Hannibal would've consumed every piece of him.

"Did you ask me to be your advisor so you could get me into your bed?"

"Have you always been so distrustful of others?"

Will gave him a side eye look over his shoulder. "You wouldn't normally give any of my kind the time of day, and all of a sudden, you're interested in the fate of the demon classes, and you're asking my only friend to reveal personal things about me, and now you've offered me a role on your court -- to help with what, exactly, I'm not really sure -- and here we are, waiting for me to finish my nightcap so you can take my blood and fuck me. Maybe I just want to know what you really want from me."

Hannibal stood up and walked towards Will, standing next to him. "I find you intriguing and entirely unpredictable."

Will snorted a laugh, finishing his drink with one large gulp. "And how long do you think it will be before the shine is polished off your new toy?"

He reached up and curled his hand around the back of Will's neck. "I am completely enraptured by you."

Will leaned closer, tilting his chin so that he could press his lips against Hannibal's mouth. The kiss was chaste, nearly shy, and Hannibal drank in his scent and the warmth of his flesh. Hannibal plucked the empty glass from his hand, setting it on top of the mantel, and wrapped his arms around Will, holding him close.

"Where do you want to bite me?"

Hannibal gazed at his neck, licking his lips. His fangs had dropped down fully, grazing against his tongue.

“Oh, of course.” Will smiled, taking a deep breath and reaching up to unbutton the top buttons of his plaid shirt, pulling the edges of the fabric away to reveal his neck to Hannibal. “Go ahead.”

Hannibal let out a low growl, sliding his fingers through the back of Will’s hair, grabbing a firm handful and pulling his head back, his eyes on his prize. Will’s eyes fluttered, closing, and he let out a soft sound as Hannibal pressed his face against the heated flesh, breathing him in deeply. It was that same scent from before, that freshly cut grass scent that reminded Hannibal of family and home and life. He licked Will’s neck, his tongue making a cool swath along his neck, feeling the pulse of blood and life and muscle underneath, ripe for his taking.

He could feel Will’s cock hard against his hip and Hannibal’s other arm tightened his hold on Will’s back, pressing him closer so that Will could feel Hannibal’s hardness as well.

“I’ll have your blood now,” Hannibal said, sliding the edge of his fang up Will’s neck. “And then I’ll have you again in my bed.”

Will jerked against him, startled by the pain of being bitten for the first time, and Hannibal indulged his darkest primal pleasure at being the first to bite Will, to take blood from him like this. His fangs were sensitive and he could feel the heat of Will’s life against them. Reluctantly, he pulled his fangs away and sucked out a mouthful, savoring the taste of Will’s blood against his tongue, reveling in the hotness of it, the fragrance of iron in the blood heady, and he swallowed slowly. He let go of Will’s hair and clutched him, squeezing him tightly as he sucked out another mouthful, hearing Will keen distantly as Hannibal’s entire being was focused on Will’s blood.

“ *Mmmmm* ...your energy is so strong,” Will murmured, his hands grasping Hannibal’s suit jacket. “I could feed off you tonight and be full for days. I can feel it.”

Hannibal gasped, licking the two holes on Will’s neck, catching every last bit of blood with his tongue. He kissed Will’s mouth, slipping his tongue into the warm, wet cavern, and teasing the tip of his tongue against the roof of his mouth.

“Hold onto me,” he said, brusquely, and picked Will up in his arms and sped through the house and up the stairs to his bedroom, tossing the incubus demon on top of his bed.

Will chuckled, flopping on the large mattress, staring up at the ceiling. “Did you just teleport us to your bedroom or something?”

Hannibal threw off his suit jacket, tossing it haphazardly on the floor, as he stared down at Will. He looked decadent and perfect on Hannibal’s bed; and he would have it so for as long as he could.

“A vampire of my age can move with great speed,” he said, kicking off his shoes and tearing the necktie off his neck. He unbuttoned his vest and tossed it somewhere behind him. Jimmy was going to scold him about it in the morning, no doubt, but Hannibal didn’t care.

Will moved up to his elbows and gave Hannibal a coy smirk. “Well, hopefully this won’t end so fast. I’m really hungry and you did promise to sate me.”

Hannibal growled and fell on top of Will, holding him down. The incubus demon chuckled up at him, blue eyes bright with amusement and lust. “You’ll beg me to finish you off before I come.”

“You know I’m an incubus, right? That means that I can go all night.”

“Greedy, lovely boy,” Hannibal said, kissing his mouth again. He was truly enraptured by the sex demon and he would have him multiple times until he was begging Hannibal to let him rest. “I accept your challenge.”

He moved off of Will to his knees and they both undressed hurriedly, flinging an assortment of clothes on the floor around the bed. Hannibal was tugging off his black silk sock when Will pushed him on his back, straddling his hips. His warm palms traced Hannibal’s chest, fingers curling and tugging on the smattering of hair before exploring his nipples, pinching them as Hannibal let out a pleased sound. Will’s fingers and hands felt like lava on his cool

skin and Hannibal found that he liked it; he could imagine how good it would feel to be inside of Will's heat.

"Where's your lube?" Will said, bending down to kiss Hannibal's chest, licking at a nipple with his wet tongue.

"In the upper drawer," Hannibal said, motioning to the bedside cabinet.

"Okay," Will murmured, kissing down Hannibal's stomach. He hummed as he licked up Hannibal's cock, pushing down the foreskin with his lips, and taking the head into his wet mouth.

Hannibal closed his eyes and moaned, reaching down to slide his fingers through Will's hair as he raised his hips gently so that he could just luxuriate inside the heat of Will's mouth, teased by that soft tongue.

"Your cock feels cooler than normal body temperature," Will said, licking over the head. "I bet it's going to feel amazing when you're inside of me."

"Yes," Hannibal said, rather helplessly.

Will smirked up at Hannibal, and then sprawled across the bed, opening the top drawer, and taking out the lube. He pushed the drawer closed and crawled back over Hannibal, smiling down at him. "Can I ride you? I want to watch you come as I feed from you."

Hannibal ran his hands up Will's thighs, curling over his hips. "Take whatever you want from me."

He watched as Will squeezed a palmful of lube and then grabbed Hannibal's cock. He thrust his hips at the coolness on his hard flesh, giving a little growl of complaint as Will chuckled knowingly. But the chill of the lube soon heated up as Will stroked him with his warm hand and Hannibal sank back against the pillows, letting Will do as he pleased. He kept his eyes on

Will's hand as he rose up on his knees, hand slipping behind him to finger himself, licking his lips as he smiled down at Hannibal.

Hannibal smiled, looking to the corner of his bedroom, where a tall standing mirror was angled perfectly so that he could watch as Will's fingers pressed inside his hole; and Will looked over his shoulder to see the mirror, meeting Hannibal's gaze in the reflection.

"Kinky," Will said, chuckling.

"All the more to appreciate the view," Hannibal said, sitting up and pulling Will down onto his lap. "The one above the fireplace mantel offers opportunities for further interesting views."

Will kissed him, slowly, licking across Hannibal's upper lip with the tip of his tongue, and delving into Hannibal's mouth to tease along his upper teeth, searching for his fangs. Hannibal dropped them slowly, murmuring his enjoyment as Will licked over his fangs.

Hannibal gave him a little nick and Will hissed in surprise, then moaned as Hannibal suckled his tongue to draw out a little bit of blood. Will nipped his bottom lip with his blunt teeth in retaliation and Hannibal chuckled, looking up at him.

"Wicked boy," he said, his voice low and teasing.

"Come on, I want to feel you inside me," Will said, wiggling as Hannibal's hands caressed the round plumpness of his ass, fingers slipping between to rub his wet hole. He slipped the tip of his middle finger inside and groaned at the way it devoured his finger. Will grabbed hold of Hannibal's cock and looked at him as he rubbed the head against his hole. Hannibal grabbed the backs of his thighs, holding on as Will sank slowly down on his cock, sucking him into his tight hole. All he could do was groan and clutch at Will, holding him close as his cock was enveloped in scorching tightness.

"Oh god, you feel so good," Will moaned, his head flung back, neck muscles tensed. "I can feel you everywhere."

Hannibal bit him on his chest, taking his blood as Will struggled through the mixture of pain and pleasure, tightening and squeezing Hannibal's cock with his inner muscles as Hannibal grabbed his shoulders and held him as he thrust his cock into Will.

Will curled his hand around Hannibal's throat and pushed him away with a snarl, and then shoved him down on his back, strong hands curled over Hannibal's shoulders. Hannibal growled, licking the blood off his lips, as Will stared down at him, riding Hannibal's cock roughly.

He was glorious, taking pleasure from Hannibal, feeding from him. It was a shame that Hannibal couldn't Turn him into a vampire. What a magnificent and fearsome creature he would be. Dark blue eyes stayed on Hannibal's face, drinking in every expression, every emotion, every sound that Hannibal produced just for Will's pleasure. He wondered what other appetites of Will that he could feed.

Will's hands slipped to Hannibal's throat as he gyrated his hips over Hannibal, his wet cock sliding in and out of Will's hole. He panted breathlessly, gripping Hannibal tighter, thumbs pressing harder against Hannibal's trachea. As a vampire, he didn't need oxygen or to breathe, but he smiled up at Will, tilting his head back and inviting Will to squeeze as hard as he wanted.

"Fuck, Hannibal," Will gasped out, eyes widening as his hands tightened even more. "Oh fuck, oh fuck...you're going to come...fuck, I can feel you, you're going to come -- "

Hannibal came, the pleasure crashing over him, feeling the vibration of his groans under Will's hands around his throat. He raised his hands and grabbed onto Will's hips, jerking him down faster and faster, thrusting into him again and again, until Will threw back his head and let out a series of grunts and then a howl. Hannibal could smell the sharp tang of Will's come, spraying against his skin, and he grabbed Will under his arms and turned them on the bed so that Will was still crying out and coming as Hannibal fucked him.

Will's groans turned into loud, gasping snickers as he collapsed under Hannibal's body. He was shaking, arms and legs akimbo on the messy sheets. "Ohmygod, Hannibal...fuck...that was something…"

Hannibal kissed him again, taking that laughing mouth and sucking on his lips and his tongue, greedy for more. “Do you think we’re finished?”

Will squeezed his eyes shut as he giggled. “Just give me a minute.”

Of course he would give Will enough time to recover. He could catch his breath and Hannibal could have a small drink. He kissed his way towards Will’s neck, nuzzling the side he hadn’t bitten, and felt his fangs descend as he licked the salty sweat of his skin. Will had his eyes closed, but wore a wide, satisfied smile on his lips, and Hannibal grinned for a moment before leaning down and biting him quick with his fangs.

“Ow!” Will said, jerking against him.

Hannibal couldn’t help his dark chuckle as he sucked at the holes, using his tongue to push against the skin, drawing more blood into his mouth. Full of pleasure and energy, Will tasted sweeter than before, less metallic and more voluminous and robust and pure. He swallowed several times before, regrettably, licking the holes carefully to clean and close them.

“You took a lot,” he said, looking at Hannibal. “I feel floaty.”

“ *Shhh* ...let me take care of you now.”

Hannibal smiled, licking down Will’s chest, stopping to kiss and lick the small, pale nipples. He dragged the tips of his fangs down the sensitive skin along his side making Will giggle and squirm. Hannibal laughed, too, and licked at the come smeared across Will’s stomach, lapping at the multitude of flavors and inhaling the musky scent of spent sex and sweat and warm flesh.

He licked up Will’s softened cock, enjoying the feeling of the flaccid flesh in his mouth.

“ *Ohhhhh* your mouth feels cold,” Will said, hissing out a pained moan. “Sensitive!”

Hannibal didn't think that was an actual complaint, so he continued to suck on the cock, feeling it starting to fill and grow against his tongue. Will inhaled deeply and let out a soft murmur, squirming against the sheets.

"I've never...gotten this hard again so fast," Will said, quivering under him.

He pulled his mouth slowly off of Will's cock and grinned, moving up on his knees as his hands grabbed Will's legs, pushing them gently apart. He stroked his palms along the soft skin of his inner thighs, smiling as Will blinked up at him, drunk on pleasure and sexual energy. Hannibal reached for the lube, squeezing a small amount into his hand and then coated his cock with it, thrilling at the chill of the liquid. He pressed the head against Will's opening and sank into him slowly, taking his time now, and watching as the ring of muscle opened around him, swallowing him in.

They both moaned and Hannibal balled his hands into fists, holding up his weight as he slowly fucked into Will, watching him now as he took his pleasure.

"Beautiful boy," he said, watching Will's face flush at the praise. "I could feast on you forever and I'll always remember this moment."

Will whimpered, hands reaching out to grab the sheets, tugging at them as he writhed and twisted under Hannibal's hold. "Please. Hannibal, please! More!"

But Hannibal wouldn't be rushed. He would take Will slowly, making him feel Hannibal's hard length, and savor the way that Will's legs wrapped around his waist, trying to urge him closer or faster, begging for more and more and more.

"You can have more," Hannibal said, feeling his fangs cutting into his own bottom lip. "You can have everything, Will."

He curled his hand around Will's cock, stroking him quickly. He watched as Will chased after his own pleasure, hips thrusting so that his cock pushed through the tunnel of Hannibal's

hand, then back down so that he could fuck himself on Hannibal's cock. Will grabbed hold of Hannibal's wrist, nails digging into Hannibal's flesh, as he cried out sharply, cursing loudly as he shuddered under Hannibal, coming in long pulses. Will murmured something and slapped at Hannibal's hand around his cock, tugging it off of him, and then fell limp against the bed with a long, sated sigh. Hannibal grabbed Will under his knees, pushing his legs up and open, and then fucked him with a series of long and fast strokes until he collapsed over Will, coming inside of him. He gasped against Will's ear and muffled is own cries of gratification against Will's warm skin, giving a hard shudder as he emptied himself completely.

Hannibal moved to his side, feeling extremely self-satisfied as he looked at the dark flush suffusing Will's entire body. He seemed to be glowing with masculine vitality and wellbeing. Hannibal relished seeing Will like this, brimming with the pleasures that Hannibal gave him and that he received just as generously from Will. In his many years, Hannibal had never taken a sex demon class being as a lover. And in the way that he was gratified to be Will's first, Hannibal was equally pleased that Will was his as well. Though, if he had his way, they would neither need another again.

"Fuck," Will said, panting breathlessly. "That was probably the best feeding I've ever had in my entire life."

"What is it like for you?" Hannibal said, sliding his palm along Will's firm body.

"It's like...it's like having eaten your favorite meal and drinking your favorite drink and sitting on a warm cloud as the sun warmed you up inside and out," Will said, one arm flung over his head, plucking at his sweat damp hair. He grinned as he turned to meet Hannibal's gaze. "It's like having a full belly on a cold winter's night, knowing that you'll never be hungry. It's like if you ran a marathon and found your runner's high and every part of your body is working at its optimal level but you don't feel tired and you don't feel any pain. You could just run forever."

Hannibal smiled, pressing a kiss to Will's shoulder. "It sounds magnificent. I should like to see you like this always."

"I imagine it's probably how you feel all the time," Will said, looking at him with a sleepy, pleased smile.

“Only when I’ve fed fresh blood to excess,” he said, softly. “The purer the source, the more power I draw from them.”

“Humans, you mean, if you drained them of blood,” Will said, blinking slowly.

“Yes.”

“Do you miss it? Being able to take everything you want?”

Hannibal stroked the back of his fingers down Will’s neck, circling the bruises that he left there. “Yes.”

He met Will’s gaze head on, wondering what the incubus demon thought of Hannibal’s honesty. But Will just nodded his head in acceptance.

“I think about it, too,” Will said, a wistful smile on his lips. “What it would be like to be able to feed from someone like that, draining them of all of their energy. It’s why we sex demons have such a bad rep; because we can fuck someone to death and take all of it if we wanted.” He sighed, deeply. “It’s why I prefer supernatural beings. There’s still some risk, but I wouldn’t be able to drain them fully.”

Such dark beauty inside of him. Hannibal wondered if he could help Will with his becoming.

“But it’s not the same as feeding on a human, whether it’s their blood or their energy,” Hannibal said, knowingly.

Will grinned at him, rolling his eyes. “Your post-sex talk is kind of morbid, Hannibal.”

“I believe that you selected the topic, my beautiful, gruesome boy.”

He watched as Will laughed, the sound vibrant and robust. Hannibal could feel just how full Will was, his lithe body trembling with so much energy. He held onto Hannibal's hand, pulling him closer as he turned on his side.

"What has caused your good humor?"

"You fucked me while wearing socks," Will said, sniggering against the pillow.

Hannibal looked down the length of their bodies and he lifted one of his feet to see that he was, indeed, still wearing his black silk socks. He dropped his foot back on the bed and tightened his arms around Will, breathing in his warm scent.

"You know...I'm not tired yet," Will said, his voice teasing and sly. "But I understand if you need to take a nap or something. I mean, given your age and all."

Hannibal growled and slammed his fangs into Will's shoulder, taking a mouthful of his sweet blood. Will moaned, half pain and half pleasure, sinking into the mess of bedding under him. Hannibal pressed his hand against Will's back, keeping him in place, as he searched for the lube somewhere on the bed. He grabbed it and squeezed a large dollop on Will's plump ass, causing Will to flinch from the cold, giggling softly as Hannibal covered his hard cock with it.

He pressed into Will's loosened hole, groaning at the heat of him, and sank down on top of him, covering him. He wrapped his ankles around Will's calves, keeping his legs parted and still, enjoying the way that the incubus demon tried to buck his hips back against Hannibal, trying to get him to move.

Hannibal leisurely lapped at the blood seeping from Will's shoulder. He used his fangs to bite into him again and again, enjoying Will's shivers of pain.

"Come on, Hannibal," Will pleaded, slipping one of his hands under him. Hannibal caught it and wrapped his fingers around Will's wrist, holding it pinned against the bed. "Oh, come on,

please, don't tease me."

"Beg all you want, my darling, but I won't let you come until **I'm** satisfied," he said, chuckling darkly against Will's ear.

***

Hannibal opened his eyes, moving from rest to awake in a moment, knowing that Will was not in bed with him. A vampire needed to sleep, preferably during daylight hours when their energies were at their lowest, but there was no hard and fast rule for when a vampire needed to rest. Hannibal was one of the oldest vampires and he didn't need as much sleep as younger vampires, but he still welcomed the feeling of rest, especially curled against the heat of a lover.

He climbed out of bed and pulled on a pair of black silk sleep pants and his black robe, using his senses to track Will's presence in his home. He had no doubt that Will was still within the walls of his house; the incubus demon wasn't so rude that he would just leave in the middle of the night without a proper goodbye.

Hannibal heard the murmur of male voices coming from the kitchen, so he walked on quiet feet, curious to hear their conversation.

"...not going to lie, I was a little surprised when Hannibal told me about you," Anthony said, the tone of his voice friendly, but with a hint of envy.

"Look, he's just helping me out."

Anthony chuckled softly. "So how was it, feeding from him?"

"That's kind of a personal question, don't you think?" Will said, roughly.

Hannibal peered into the kitchen at the two men. Anthony prowled around the kitchen island, leaning his hips against the edge as he smiled at Will.

“Considering that the whole household could hear you, I think we’ve already crossed that line.”

“Jesus, Anthony -- “

“For a sex demon, you are remarkably shy.” Anthony commented, reaching out to run his hand through Will’s messy hair. “And you are remarkably beautiful.”

“Are you...are you hitting on me?”

Hannibal watched as Anthony leaned closer to Will. He liked seeing the two of them; in another life, Anthony looked like he could be Will’s older brother.

“If that’s the kind of party you want. I’m sure Hannibal won’t mind. He said that you need to be fed regularly. Maybe I can help you with that, too.”

Will sighed, laughing softly. “Look, you don’t have to be jealous. I’m not going to do anything to get between whatever you and Hannibal have. He’s just...helping me out right now. It’s just blood and sex. I don’t need your pity or whatever.”

Anthony touched Will’s cheek with his fingers. “It’s not jealousy. No one can threaten my blood contract with Hannibal. And it’s not pity either. You’re beautiful and I would be honored to feed you.”

“Don’t you think we should talk to Hannibal first? I think he would find it rude if we didn’t.”

“You’re so sweet,” Anthony said, brushing the pad of his thumb across Will’s bottom lip. “I can see why he likes you. Can I have him, Hannibal?”

Hannibal stepped into the kitchen, bemused as Will moved away from Anthony, flustered and blushing. “I’m glad to find you both. I would like to discuss this, but perhaps after we are all rested. I’ll ask Jimmy to make you both a healthy lunch.”

Anthony smiled, giving Will a little wink as he walked towards Hannibal. “Goodnight, luv.”

Hannibal returned the smile. “Sleep well, Anthony.” He turned to look at Will, holding out his hand. “I did not enjoy waking up to an empty bed.”

Will chuckled, walking towards him. He didn’t take Hannibal’s hand, but he ducked his head shyly. “I wasn’t sure if I should’ve just gotten up and left. You looked, uh, like you were deep in sleep, so I came down to get some water. Met Anthony. I don’t know why you want me, when you already have a full-time donor.”

Hannibal pressed his hand on Will’s back, caressing his warmth with a cool hand. “It’s not just your blood that I want, Will. I want to feed you and keep you healthy.”

“Okay,” Will said, softly, nodding his head. He raised his chin and met Hannibal’s eyes, a small smile forming on his plush lips. “I’m actually kind of tired. Can I stay the night?”

“Yes,” Hannibal said, pressing a gentle kiss on Will’s lips. “Stay for as long as you would like.”

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Author's Note: Will's lecture is adapted from the works of Immanuel Kant.

Hannibal looked into the classroom from the open doorway of classroom 211 in Phillips Hall, curious to see what Will was like as a professor. It was one of the larger lecture rooms with about fifty students squeezed into every available space. Will commanded the students' attention from the front of the class, the three whiteboards covered in his chicken scratch handwriting. He had learned from Alana that Will taught one of the most popular classes in the social justice program, an interdisciplinary course called *Fact/Field/Fiction: Intersections of Human and Supernatural Beings.* The students in his class were all alert, if not overly attentive, and Will paced the limited space in the front of the class as he spoke.

"...so even if you do not commit an injustice yourself according to human laws and policies, you can still participate in general injustice," Will said, pausing as he saw Hannibal standing in the doorway. "Think of it like this: You see a supernatural person being beat up in an alley and you find yourself moved to help them. You yell at the attackers and threaten to call the police, and they run away. You think that your actions prevented an injustice to this being; but it wasn't something in your power to give. All you have done is prevented the attackers from taking from the supernatural being through general injustice. Even an act of generosity is tied to forced duty and indebtedness, which is taken from the inherent rights of others."

Hannibal watched as the students, who were mostly human, stared at Will in silence, perhaps a little stunned at being called out so plainly.

"Professor Graham," a young woman called, raising her hand.

"Yes," he said, nodding to her.

"Then is the *Good Samaritan* invalid because helping someone forces both of them into a form of duty and debt?"

Will smiled and nodded to her. “It depends on how you interpret the original parable. A man was beaten and left for dead on the dangerous road between Jericho and Jerusalem; and a Priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan encountered him, but each took a different action. The Priest and Levite left him, perhaps thinking he was already dead, crossing the road so that they would not touch an unclean body. The Samaritans of those times were hated by the Jewish people, but when the Samaritan encountered the person beaten and robbed and stripped of his clothes and dignity, the Samaritan helped him. He took him to an inn, paid for his room and food, and told the innkeeper to keep an eye on the man, and if there were any additional costs incurred, the Samaritan would pay the innkeeper when he came back to town. Why is the *Good Samaritan* so revered in this parable?”

“He helped a man that he hated or hated him.”

“It represents the ethics of Jesus.”

“It’s an example of ethics and being just.”

“It was mercy.”

Will nodded, pacing the room again. “Mercy...that’s always an interesting one. The Samaritan showed the beaten man mercy. How generous of him. How *righteous* of him. How just of him. But was that mercy his to even give in the first place? Why would he need to give such a thing? Because the other man was beaten and robbed for being who he was? Being in the wrong place at the wrong time? Being different? Being Jewish? Being a supernatural person? They had taken from the injured man something that he had a right to as a living being. He had the right to travel, the right to presume safety of his body and his belongings, the right to have a business and money — but most of all, he has the right to exist, and that was what was taken from him, that no one else can give as a gift of mercy or duty. It is an inherent right for a supernatural being; just as it is an inherent right for a human being.”

Hannibal watched as Will walked back to the table in front of the room, looking down at his opened notebook.

“Your assignment for this week is to write a 1,000 word essay on the quality of mercy as force, as duty, and as a debt. See it from the human perspective and the supernatural perspective. If you have any questions, you can email me or find me at my office on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 PM -- don’t forget to schedule time with Nanette. That’s all for today. Thank you.”

A swarm of students surrounded Will at the table, engaging him into conversations and asking questions and just prolonging their time with him. Will tried to keep up with a dozen conversations going at once around him, and he finally just chuckled, waving his hands and asked the students to make an appointment with his TA for office hours.

Hannibal watched as a few students recognized who he was, giving him a polite head bow as they passed him through the door. Other students stared openly at him, whispering to each other, curious at his presence in Professor Graham’s lecture room.

He entered the classroom as the last of the students left, somewhat reluctantly, and smiled at Will. “Hello, Will. That was a fascinating topic. I enjoyed the way that you presented the parable as an allegory for social injustice issues for supernatural beings.”

Will smirked, looking at him. “For **some** supernatural beings.” He started packing up his messenger bag. “What brings you down to DC?”

“I was actually in the city on business and I thought I could visit you and invite you to dinner at the club tonight,” Hannibal said, smiling at him.

He watched as Will blinked at him owlishly, blushing slightly. “Oh. I, uh, yes, okay.” He laughed, shaking his head. “Sorry, I wasn’t expecting to see you. I mean, it’s not our usual Thursday night meeting time. I don’t know why — I didn’t think — “

“Will,” Hannibal said, stepping closer and placing his hand on Will’s shoulder. “I enjoy spending time with you. And if I can persuade you to spend time with me more than once a week, I would be a fool not to ask. Unless you have other plans…”

“No, no, no plans,” he said, shaking his head, looking a little nervous.

“Is there something the matter? You seem a little distressed.”

Will glanced up at him, the deep red flush returning to his cheeks, and Hannibal wanted to bite him and lick at all that blood coming up to the surface.

“Just, kind of discombobulated,” he said, chuckling to himself. Bright blue eyes peered up at Hannibal and he smiled. “I’d love to have dinner with you tonight.”

“Wonderful,” Hannibal said, agreeably. “Do you have your car nearby? I can have one of my men pick it up and return it to your home.”

“No, it’s all right, I took the metro in. If someone can drop me off at the station later, I can pick it up and drive home,” Will said, pulling the strap of his bag over his shoulder.

***

Hannibal watched as Will slipped into the back of the Bentley and Hannibal nodded for Miriam to begin driving. Will jerked on the seatbelt, trying to pull it across him, and Hannibal reached over, inhaling the wonderful scent of him as he pulled the seatbelt across his chest and lap, securing it in the seatbelt lock. Will blinked, giving him a surprised look when he realized that Hannibal was very close to him, but Hannibal merely grinned and settled back on his side of the seat.

“I noticed that your class was quite full,” he said, watching as Will’s fingers twitched on his lap.

“Yeah, it’s pretty popular,” Will said, shrugging. “I think a lot of my students heard that I’m an incubus demon and they signed up for my class out of curiosity about me, rather than on the topics in the class.”

“I disagree that’s the only reason. It seemed to me that your students were paying attention to your lecture.”

Will smirked, shaking his head. “Yeah, I think after the first couple of weeks, they realized that there’s a lot of work to do in my class and that I’m not going to be exuding my sex hormones all over the place. I do know how to control myself.”

“That was never in question,” he said, smiling. “I want you to hear from me, before you hear from anyone else, that I did stop in to speak to the Dean of the Columbian School of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Carson Riser and I had an illuminating discussion about potential faculty discrimination in his department.”

“Faculty discrimination?”

“Yes. I provided him with an example of your lack of tenure, despite the fact that you helped to increase enrollments into the social justice programs, and that you are published and respected by your colleagues in the field; and that the respect you’ve gained, I was pleased to point out, has nothing to do with the fact that you are an incubus demon and I wondered what it was that held you back in your career at George Washington. Dr. Riser was greatly... *enlightened* .”

Will stared at him, narrowing his eyes. “Are you -- did you threaten my boss for me?”

“Not just you,” Hannibal said, gazing at him. He could sense Will’s temper coming to the fore and it was deliciously tempting to pursue it. “I’ve asked my Seneschal to make a list of where and how the demon classes are employed in North America. I’m determined to learn more about the struggles that they’re facing. The supernatural court will be making a major political push towards reforming how demon classes are treated in this country. My hope is that you and my Seneschal will work together to review new legislature. My impromptu meeting with Dr. Riser was to invite him to *proactively* review his own policies on this matter, especially as you are my advisor.”

He watched as Will laughed, head tossed back, eyes crinkled in mirth. “Jesus, Hannibal...you really don’t do things by halves.”

“I very rarely do anything by halves, what would be the point?”

“You know I don’t speak for every demon class being in the country, right? I would never presume to be their spokesman. Demons are individuals and have different needs than me.”

“But you alone have the ear of the vampire king, which many do not, and human and supernatural beings will come to you,” Hannibal said, softly. A part of him wondered if Will understood the position that he was in; if he would let the power of his influence change him. Not many could resist the temptation of being so close to power and not using some of it to exert their own payback. “Frederick will help you, Will. We won’t leave you alone to do the work. He will introduce you to my legislative staff and they’ll spearhead the political work. I just need you to ensure that we’re doing the best that we can and we haven’t left anyone out in the cold.”

Will ran his hand through his hair, taking a deep breath. “Wow...I wasn’t really expecting any of this, Hannibal.”

“Are you having second thoughts?”

“It’s more that -- I don’t know if anyone will take me seriously.“ Will broke out into a nervous laugh. “I really didn’t think **you** were going to take this advising thing seriously.”

Hannibal reached out and rubbed his thumb along Will’s jawline, catching his attention. “There are easier ways to seduce you than to offer you something like this. If our partnership should end, I would regret it enormously, but I would still want you to be part of this reform. I’ve read your publications on social justice and supernatural policy reform, Will. I must apologize for seeing only your demon class and not who you are. I think your contributions to our community will be one of the greatest things we can accomplish together.”

“It’s true what they say about you,” Will said, blushing prettily as he turned to look at him. “You do have a silver forked tongue.”

Hannibal chuckled, sitting back in his seat. “You of all people should know that my tongue is neither silver nor forked, but it is quite talented, if I may say so.”

Will laughed, looking across the seat at Hannibal, blue eyes bright with warmth and good humor.

***

Hannibal led Will into the rear private entrance to *Dolce* , through the busy kitchens, and into the main salon where Bedelia was waiting at Hannibal's usual booth with two very attractive supernatural beings. Hannibal realized that they were sirens, one an older woman with white blonde hair and plump rosy cheeks, the other a younger man with jet black hair and caramel colored skin. The three of them looked up as Hannibal and Will approached, their siren smiles beautiful with just a hint of danger.

"Hello Bedelia," Hannibal said, leaning down to brush his lips against her cheeks. "Well done, my dear."

"Good evening, Hannibal. Will." She said, getting to her feet to allow for Hannibal and Will to sit down in the booth. "May I introduce my brethren? This is Simone and this is Kael. You know Lord Lecter, of course, and this is Will Graham."

Hannibal watched as the two sirens bowed their heads to him, and shook Will's hand with friendly regard.

"Let me call for refreshments for the table," Bedelia said, winking at Hannibal as she made her way through the salon, speaking to one of her waiters.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Graham," Kael said, watching Will with black eyes rimmed with thick eyelashes. Hannibal thought he was quite beautiful, warm with a youthful glow, just in his mid-20s.

"It's just Will," he said and then looked questioningly at Hannibal.

“Will,” Simone said, giving him a pretty smile. She was older but no less beautiful, perhaps in her 40s, with pale alabaster skin and hair so blonde that it looked like spun silver. Her cheeks were naturally rosy, the flush giving her an innocent appearance. “We’ve asked to meet you because we understand that you need to feed regularly. Kael and I both have had past relationships with a member of the demon class, and we understand the necessity to feed regularly.”

Will opened his mouth and stared at the two sirens. “I, uh...don’t know...what’s happening here, to be honest.”

“Will, I know you face difficulty in finding trusted partners who can keep you fed regularly,” Hannibal said, watching Will’s emotions cross his handsome face. “I thought that if you met Simone and Kael, you’d allow them to assist you.”

“To assist me...with feeding me sexual energy,” Will said, dryly. “Hannibal, I told you that I didn’t want to do this because it’s taking advantage.”

“How is it taking advantage?” Kael said, looking at Will with genuine curiosity. “Do you fear the power dynamic between us? Or that we are somehow being forced to share our energy with you?”

“Well, yes,” he said, terribly embarrassed. “I’m not trying to be insulting here, but...you don’t even know me. Why would you even want to do this?”

Simone chuckled, exchanging a look with Kael. “We’ve seen you around. You’re gorgeous. And from what people say about you, you’re actually a very... *nice* man.”

“There is no expectation, Will,” Hannibal said, enjoying this far too much. “And this is merely a social introduction to see if you would like to get to know Simone and Kael, and they you.”

Kael, the bold one, placed his hand on Will’s arm, his lovely face lit up with a siren’s smile. Very few could resist a siren’s charm. “Simone and I have a private tea room upstairs. Would you like to have some tea with us, Will?”

Hannibal watched as Will nodded slowly, shyly, ducking his chin and looking at Hannibal.

“Is it just tea...or something else?”

Hannibal chuckled. “You’ll have to go upstairs with them and find out for yourself.”

***

Hannibal moaned, hugging the plush pillow with his arms, as the heat of Will’s hard cock slammed into his ass, searing inside of him. Will groaned, his teeth pressed into the meat of Hannibal’s shoulder, as he laid over Hannibal’s back, his hips thrusting in a fiery rhythm against Hannibal.

“Need to taste you, need you to come, Hannibal,” Will mumbled, slipping his right hand under Hannibal’s belly to wrap around the cool flesh of his hard cock. “Fuck, you need to come now!”

Hannibal chuckled as he squeezed his inner muscles around Will’s cock, feeling the plump head of it sliding across his prostate. Will gasped, his hand stroking him faster, and he let out a heartfelt cry of pleasure against Hannibal’s ear when he felt Hannibal’s pleasure uncoil under him.

“Fuck yes, fuck, fuck, yes, oh fuck Hannibal yes!”

He could feel Will’s come as it filled him, the way that his hard flesh pulsed and oozed liquid heat, and Hannibal groaned as Will squeezed the head of his cock, determined to pull every last bit of pleasure out of Hannibal’s body.

Will collapsed over his back, breathlessly, a heavy weight that Hannibal didn’t mind bearing. He was wrapped in Will’s mortal warmth and they each shivered from the intensity of the

pleasure and the feeding.

“Jesus, I have a headache,” Will mumbled against Hannibal’s neck. “Everything is buzzing. I think my brain exploded in a ball of white light and I don’t want to open my eyes.”

Hannibal couldn’t help the soft snicker that escaped his lips, gently wiggling under Will’s near dead weight, feeling the softening cock slip out of him as he rolled Will onto his back. Hannibal propped himself up on his elbow and traced the palm of his hand from Will’s neck, across his chest, and down his soft belly. His fingers caressed Will’s cock, grinning as Will winced from over sensitivity, and then smoothed his hand over a strong thigh.

“Don’t tell me that I’ve exhausted you,” Hannibal said, cheekily.

Will opened one bleary eye and stared at Hannibal with it, lips pursing in a small pout. “Don’t you ever get tired?”

“Of being with you? Never.”

Will laughed, closing his eye, and stretching his arms over his head, his hands pushing against the cushioned headboard. “I’ve never been sated like this before. It’s...an odd feeling.”

“I’m assuming that Simone and Kael are keeping you fed?”

Will opened his eyes and turned his head to look up at Hannibal. “They’re both so sweet...and yeah, it’s nice being able to go to them. But I like feeding from you best.”

He smiled, taking Will’s hand and pressing a kiss to his palm. He kept his eyes on Will’s face as he licked the fragile inner skin of his wrist, his fangs sliding into Will’s flesh. Will made a soft whimper of pain, sucking in his breath through his teeth, but he didn’t pull away. Will’s hand curled over Hannibal’s cheek, stroking his skin as Hannibal took a deep pull of his blood. He savored the new flavors in Will, his blood tasted richer and healthier now that he

was feeding regularly, and Hannibal swallowed slowly, inhaling so that he could enjoy the after taste of Will's blood in the back of his throat. He licked the two wounds with the flat of his tongue and pressed a kiss on the crook of his elbow.

"It...it doesn't bother you?" Will said, hesitantly, biting his bottom lip. "That I feed from others?"

Hannibal brushed his lips up Will's upper arm. "Does it bother you that I take blood from others?"

"No, of course not," he said, honestly. Hannibal looked up to see confusion etched on Will's face. "It's just that...I know we don't owe each other anything but...I feel a little guilty being with them."

"Oh darling," Hannibal said, caressing Will's head with his hand. "There is nothing for you to feel guilty about. It is your nature as an incubus, as blood is a necessary part of being a vampire. I would never deny you a chance to be full. I could keep you sated myself, but I think you rather enjoy the variety."

He watched as Will blushed, his eyes closing and his lips curving into a little smile. "And does that philosophy apply to you?"

"Are you asking me if I have other lovers, Will?" Hannibal teased, raising his eyebrows. "I'm sure Anthony made our relationship very clear, and yes, there are others."

Will met his gaze with a more serious one of his own. "I realized that I don't really know you very well. We have sex and we share our energies...but I don't really know you. I don't even know how old you are. If you have any mortal or immortal family. Or if you like being a vampire king. And what you do when you have time off."

Hannibal felt his dead heart bloom with life as he smiled at Will. "You would like to know me."

“I think you once offered to be my friend,” Will said, looking up at him. “Friends usually talk and hang out and do things together...not just in bed.”

“Then would you like to accompany me this Saturday to an evening concert?”

Will gave him a squinty look. “Seriously? An evening concert. Am I going to have to wear a suit?”

Hannibal licked Will’s chest and then sucked lightly on his little pink nipple. “Of course not, Will, you would need to wear a tuxedo.”

***

Much later, as Will slept in his bed curled up against Hannibal’s side, Hannibal allowed his body to rest when he scented Miriam’s presence just outside of his bedroom. Carefully, Hannibal slipped out of bed and covered Will up with the soft bedding, and pulled on his black robe as he quietly opened the door, stepping into the hallway.

“Good evening, my lord. I apologize for disturbing your rest, but the Princess has requested to speak with you. I have set up the monitor in your study,” Miriam said, keeping her head bowed, eyes averted.

“Thank you, Miriam,” he said, making his way down the stairs and into his study. He sat down at his desk and looked at the large monitor, smiling when he saw the face of his beloved childe.

“Father,” she said, bowing lowly to him.

“Dear Chiyoh, you look well, my childe.”

She rose gracefully and gave him a small smile. “Father, I have spoken with the demon class beings who have left America seeking asylum in my region. They would not dare to insult you, but they felt that they needed to leave in order to seek new opportunities here as a protected class.”

Hannibal nodded, somberly. “Yes, I have failed in my duty to them.”

“Your Seneschal has told me that you are working on reforms.”

“Yes, a long time coming, I fear.”

Chiyoh gave him a soft smile. “It is never too late for our kind to change. Please call on me if you need me, Father.”

“I hope to see you and Francis, perhaps in the summer. Frederick will organize a visit for the two of you,” he said, smiling at her perfect face. “Recently, I’ve longed to go on a hunt with the two of you.”

“It has been decades since we enjoyed a hunt together,” she said, bowing again. “I will make time for a visit.”

“Wonderful, my dear, thank you.”

“Father, if I may, your Seneschal also shared that you have made a new friend, an incubus demon named Will Graham.”

Hannibal raised his eyebrow and stared at Chiyoh. “Certainly, the two of you have better things to discuss than any new friendships I may or may not have made.”

Chiyoh bowed again, but not before Hannibal caught the smirk that she wore on her lips. “Yes, Father.” She paused, for effect. “Perhaps my brother and I will get the honor to meet

your new friend when we visit."

Hannibal chuckled. "We shall see."

"Rest well, Father."

"Rest well, my lovely one," he said, ending the call and shutting down his computer.

He leaned in his chair and felt his chest tighten with pride as he considered his childe. Chiyoh was a young handmaiden, just a teenager, when he first encountered her on his travels. She had accompanied her lady into the holy lands as her protector and guardian. Lady Murasaki was human, but she was no shy blossom; at the prime age of 70, she proved to have a quick mind and a quick blade. Hannibal adored her and stayed with her until her mortal death.

"I would Turn you without hesitation if you asked it of me," Hannibal said, clutching her hand as she stared at him with her doe-like brown eyes, her long hair white and thinning, her skin paper thin that he could trace her veins with his eyes.

"And what would you do with an old woman such as I?" Murasaki said, chuckling lowly. "An immortal being so frail that she wouldn't be able to hunt on her own. Where is your love then, Hannibal?"

"I would care for you forever. You would want for nothing."

Murasaki touched his face. "Love should never be a burden. Take the rest of my blood, Hannibal, and take Chiyoh into your protection. She has been a daughter to us both."

Hannibal couldn't speak, and he lifted her frail body carefully into his arms, brushing soft kisses on her face and lips, and licked her neck as she tilted her chin back, giving him all the permission he needed. He bit her quickly and felt her shiver against him, and drank all of her blood as her heart quieted and stopped beating.

He set her down on the bed and stroked her face with his hands. He could still Turn her, against her will, and bring her back to make her forever a part of him. She would hate him for it; but her death was a loss he didn't know how to bear.

"She would never forgive you," Chiyoh said, standing behind him, her sword in her hands. "I have sworn to obey her, even in her death. If you Turn her, I will cut off your head."

Chiyoh was also trained to be a warrior and Hannibal acted as her guardian and teacher, until she came to him and promised him fealty, if he would Turn her and treat her like a daughter. Hannibal quickly agreed and he had never regretted it.

Hannibal rose to his feet and left his study, walking back into the hall and up the stairs to his bedroom where his demon lover was still sleeping. Will had sprawled out on the large bed, one of his feet sticking out from under the covers, arms flung over his head, giving the appearance of innocence and vulnerability.

He stood beside the bed and stared for a long moment, watching as Will breathed slowly and deeply, his eyes moving under his closed eyelids, and Hannibal wondered what he dreamed.

***

"To life," his Seneschal said, holding up his glass of blood wine.

Hannibal raised his glass as well. "To life."

"Will Graham has...exceeded my expectations," Frederick said, swirling the blood wine in his glass. "I have not been fair to him and the rest of his kind. He has an exceptional mind and I am eager to see his true potential."

"And what is the reaction of my legislative staff?"

Frederick chuckled, sharing a look with Hannibal. “At first they were quite put out that you would add an incubus demon to their ranks. However, in the last few meetings, Will has held his ground adeptly. He is a very persuasive speaker. Will has already gained Alpha Crawford as an ally. Will has the support of the Baltimore pack.”

This pleased Hannibal greatly. His lips pursed as he looked into his glass. “Perhaps Will is proving to be a better politician than we thought.”

“To be honest, my lord, I’m quite excited to see Will shake up the legislature. It’s been years since they’ve been of any real use.”

“Do I detect censure in your words, Seneschal?”

Frederick froze, his eyes darting to Hannibal. “My lord, I would never -- “

Hannibal laughed softly. “Be at peace, Frederick; I deserve the censure. I’ve allowed the plight of supernatural beings under my protection to exist in a substandard life.”

“My lord...if I may speak frankly.”

“Yes.”

“Is your recent interest in championing the rights of the demon classes due to your personal interest in Will Graham?”

Hannibal leaned back in his armchair and smiled. “If you’re asking me if I would have eventually worked to reform legislature in favor of the demon classes, then my answer is no. My pride and my prejudices have blinded me for centuries against them. I’ve only seen the dregs of their kind, the sexual scavengers begging for scraps like common whores, tasteless and unworthy of my attention.”

“It is a prejudice that is not easily changed, my lord. Don’t beat yourself up too hard. None of us were willing to listen.”

Hannibal rubbed his lip with his thumb. “Is that not our responsibility, Frederick, to listen to the supernatural beings in our community? To help them achieve a life that they can be proud of next to our human brethren?”

He watched as Frederick smiled, looking at Hannibal thoughtfully.

“I have served you for nearly my entire existence, my lord,” his Seneschal said, emotionally. “We have made many changes in the lives of our brethren, but it has always been from our perspective. I think this is the first time we’ve been open to the needs of our community from theirs.”

“ *Hmmmm…* ” Hannibal murmured, nodding slowly. “I spoke with Chiyoh the other night.”

He watched as his Seneschal blinked, a flash of a smile hidden away under his professional demeanor. “How is the Princess, my lord?”

Hannibal chuckled. “I didn’t know that you enjoyed gossiping with my daughter.”

He watched as Frederick flushed, dropping his eyes. “The Princess asked me how you were doing...I didn’t believe I was breaking any confidences when I told her about Will Graham.”

“You didn’t break a confidence, Frederick,” he said, feeling a little wicked as he grinned at Frederick’s discomfort. “I would like for you to work with Francis and Chiyoh and invite them to spend two weeks with me here in Baltimore. Late summer, I think. They may bring their entourage. Make sure that a house and staff are available to each of them, but keep them close by.”

“Yes, my lord,” Frederick said, tamping down his excitement.

“Frederick, I have wondered why you haven’t taken a blood mate,” he said, casually. “Do I not give you enough time away from your duties?”

“No, um, it’s fine, my lord,” he said, chuckling nervously. “I’ve just not...well, that is...it’s just that…”

“I know that you have long admired my daughter, and that she is elusive.”

Frederick stared at him. “My lord, I would never presume to pursue her. I know my place in your court and I’m not worthy of someone as...perfect as the Princess.”

Hannibal felt the corner of his lips twitch. “As her father, I’m biased when I call her perfect, but she is not perfect. She is a woman, despite her rank in my court, and I would like nothing more than to see my daughter happy.”

“Happy...with me?”

“If you can persuade her,” Hannibal said, setting his glass on the table and getting to his feet. He chuckled at seeing his Seneschal at a loss for words, staring up at him with wide eyes, his mouth slightly parted. “You’ll have your chance when she arrives in the city.”

“Thank you, my lord.”

“I would be sad to lose you as my Seneschal, Frederick. I may not have said it often, but I have always been grateful for your loyal service. You will need to begin training a new Seneschal to replace you if you leave my court. Though Chiyoh will not get to take you away from me for some time, though, so consider your replacement very carefully.”

“Thank you, my lord,” he whispered, shakily.

***

Hannibal parked his nondescript vehicle outside of a small red brick house and stepped out. The front door opened and Randall bowed, gesturing for Hannibal to come inside.

“Good evening, Randall.”

“Good evening, my lord,” he said, helping Hannibal out of his coat. “Thank you for meeting us here. Miriam is in the dining room.”

Hannibal followed Randall into the dining room to find that the furnishings were removed, with only two long tables with papers stacked in neat piles, and every available inch of the dining room walls covered with images and documents.

“Good evening, my lord,” Miriam said, bowing when she saw Hannibal enter the room. “As you can see, we’ve been investigating the recent deaths of the supernatural beings and we’ve narrowed our suspects to three beings.”

Randall tapped the picture of an older man, distinguished in his looks. “This is Dr. Abel Gideon, he’s human but his speciality is in supernatural genome research. We’ve had the pack follow him over the last fourteen days, but Dr. Gideon has proven to be quite predictable in his day to day movements. He only came to our attention because of his specialty, but he’s not deviated from his schedule -- home, the research center, tennis, mistress, gym, and home.”

Hannibal watched as Randall pointed to the black and white surveillance photos showing Dr. Gideon in a variety of different locations.

“Next, we have Georgia Madchen,” Miriam said, picking up from Randall. She placed her hand on the photograph of a lovely young woman with long dark blonde hair. “She’s a chimera, a fire being. A few years ago, she was institutionalized and diagnosed with Cotard’s Syndrome -- “

“ *Ahhh* ...I’m familiar with this disorder,” Hannibal said, looking at the next series of surveillance photographs of Georgia. “She believed that she was dead or missing her organs.”

Miriam nodded. “Georgia Madchen was released to her mother, and she continued her therapy. We believe that she is not a danger, but because the glands of supernatural beings were taken, we wanted to make sure that Georgia hadn’t reverted back to her delusion and started taking glands to replace the ones she believed she had lost.”

“The pack followed her for fourteen days as well, but Georgia Madchen was always in the presence of a family member. All of her time was accounted for.”

“Intriguing,” Hannibal murmured, looking at the young woman again. As a former psychiatrist, he was drawn to the rarest mental disorders and he wondered if he might visit with her.

“Lastly, we have Tobias Budge,” Randall said, showing Hannibal the last set of photographs. Tobias was a handsome, slender man, with piercing dark eyes. “Tobias Budge is a warlock, and he’s quite musically gifted. He owns a store in the downtown area called Chordophone String Shop. The pack surveilled him for fourteen days, but there were several days when the pack couldn’t account for Budge’s whereabouts.”

“Being a warlock made it difficult to track him,” Miriam said, an excited look in her eyes. “However, Randall and I visited the shop while Tobias Budge was on an errand. The store is clean and well kept, and Budge has a sterling reputation in the music community as a maestro in strings.”

Hannibal looked at the photographs. “Catgut?”

Randall and Miriam exchanged looks. “We think he’s using human intestines.”

“Were you able to find any evidence of the missing glands?”

“We looked as thoroughly as we could, but he may not be keeping it in his store,” Randall said, looking at Hannibal. “Of the evidence that Miriam and I have collected, we believe that Tobias Budge is the killer.”

Hannibal nodded to Randall and to Miriam. “Thank you, both, for your work on this case.”

“Should we update the Seneschal so that he can alert Agent Katz?” Miriam said, pleased.

“If you will permit me, I shall take care of it personally.”

Miriam’s smile faded. “But, my lord -- “

Randall placed his hand on her shoulder, squeezing tightly. “Of course, my lord, we will do what you believe is best in this matter.”

“My lord, if there is an injustice in the supernatural community, I must insist that we bring it to the authorities immediately,” Miriam said, shaking off Randall’s hold on her and stepping closer towards Hannibal.

“I admire your sense of justice, Miriam,” Hannibal said, meeting her eyes. “I would like to pursue this matter discreetly. The killer is a member of our community and commits crimes against our kind. I would not let the killer escape unscathed.”

Miriam scowled. “Unscathed? My lord -- “

“It is not our place to pursue,” Randall said, sharply, cutting her off. “We must trust that Lord Lecter will ensure that justice is meted out.”

Hannibal watched as Miriam struggled to contain herself, pressing her lips together tightly as she bowed her acquiescence to Hannibal. It was begrudging and not sincere at all. Hannibal met Randall's eyes and nodded his head to the werewolf.

***

"He is flourishing under your care, Hannibal."

Hannibal smiled, watching as Will prowled through the main salon, looking for a snack. Simone and Kael kept to his side, introducing Will to others, but mostly showing him off. Sirens were not possessive creatures, but they didn't like to share Will with others. Will was a prize, but he wasn't a trophy, and sirens always did enjoy a good game of keep away.

"And is he everything you desire?"

Hannibal smiled, his eyes moving over Will's body. "More."

Bedelia smiled smugly, as she leaned back against the velvet cushion. "In all the centuries that we have been friends, I have never seen you so taken with someone before, Hannibal."

"He's uncommon in many ways."

"What would the supernatural community say if the vampire king took an incubus demon as a blood mate, raising him to be your equal. All those who once treated him like a lowly beast would now have to bow to him," she said, turning her eyes to Hannibal. "The scandal would be delicious. The members of your court would protest."

Hannibal sipped his blood wine, smiling cruelly. "Let them. I'll watch as Will burned them all down."

" *Oohhh* ...you are in love," she said, teasingly. "Does he know? Does he feel the same?"

“I do not know his mind,” he said, thoughtfully. “Yet.”

Bedelia gave him a knowing look. “I shall have Randall prepare your suite. I have my doubts that you and your lovely demon will be able to wait the length of the drive to your home.”

“Thank you, Bedelia,” Hannibal said, watching as Kael whispered something in Will’s ear that made the incubus demon blush to the tips of his ears. Kael told Simone and Simone cooed at Will, pressing against him.

Hannibal smiled when Will looked up and across the salon, searching for Hannibal. Kael and Simone saw who had Will’s attention and they whispered something to him, looking at Hannibal. Whatever it was that they said made Will flush a very deep red, and they gently pushed him away from them, urging Will towards Hannibal’s table.

“Enjoying your evening, my darling?”

Will licked his lips and smiled, holding out his hand. “I heard that you have a private room here. Maybe you’d like to show it to me?”

Hannibal could sense the whole of the salon holding their breaths, their eyes focused only on Will. Hannibal took Will’s hand and stood from the booth seat, raising the hand and kissing the back of it as he stared into Will’s very blue eyes.

“I would show you anything you asked,” he said, pulling Will close and pressing a chaste kiss on his lips.

***

Hannibal was feeling pleasantly full. He had spent a leisurely evening with Anthony and after the human fell asleep, Hannibal found himself sitting at his harpsichord, working on the

ending to his latest composition. So when the doorbell rang, he was slightly annoyed at the disturbance. He looked at the clock and it was past 11 o'clock in the evening. He wasn't expecting any guests, and a part of him hoped that it might be Will.

"My lord, Ms. Margot Verger would like a moment of your time," Jimmy said, stepping into the living room, concern written on his face. "She looks...she's been roughed up."

Hannibal stopped playing and stood up, nodding. "Show her in, and make her a warm cup of tea, please."

"Ms. Verger, this way," Jimmy said, bringing her into the room.

Hannibal frowned when he saw that she had dark bruises around the eyes and dried blood caked on her nose and mouth. Her dark hair had fallen out of her ponytail and parts of her clothes were torn. She braced herself with a deep breath and gave a bow that looked quite painful, her arms curled protectively around her stomach. He could smell fresh blood coming from her. The wounds on her face wouldn't have spilled enough to leave behind that sour tang. Hannibal suspected that there would be more.

"My lord -- "

"Margot, what happened? Do you require medical care?"

She nodded, her lips trembling, and collapsed. If it weren't for Hannibal's quick reflexes, she would've fallen on the marble floor. He held her carefully in his arms, moving her gently to the sofa by the fireplace, and setting her down on the cushions.

"Did your brother do this?" He said, touching her with professional care, his experience as a medical doctor coming to the fore. "May I inspect your wounds?"

"He's out of control," she whispered, trying to catch her breath. "I can't go back there."

“Then you shall stay here, for as long as you like, under my protection,” he said, moving her clothes aside to see what looked like a recent surgical wound on her lower belly. Hannibal was displeased by the shoddy workmanship. The person who cut her and then stapled her shut was a butcher, not a doctor. “I would know the name of the people who did this to you. And I would make sure that they felt the full weight of my power for this atrocity.”

“I’m begging you for asylum, Hannibal,” she said, clutching his hand fiercely with both of hers. “Don’t let him get me.”

Hannibal looked into her fearful blue eyes. “On my word, no one will hurt you again.”

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

> Possible triggery topics: Margot's sexual abuse and non-consensual abortion/surgery (no on-screen descriptions or details, it's a conversation between Margot and Hannibal). There are a couple of on-screen murders, one of them committed by Hannibal. Canon-level descriptions, nothing too explicit. And more sexytimes between Hannibal and Will.

In less than 24-hours, Margot Verger was settled into her new rooms in Lector Manor. Hannibal had asked Miriam and Randall to take a few of their werewolves to go to the Verger estate and to collect Margot's belongings. If Mason Verger or anyone else attempted to stop them, Hannibal gave them permission to draw blood.

Randall's lips moved into a ferocious and toothy smile. "Are we to strictly interpret your orders, my lord?"

Hannibal gave him a cool look. "As it pleases you, Randall. I am assured that you will do whatever is necessary to complete my order to the letter."

When seven werewolves returned to Hannibal's home carrying boxes and bags of Margot's belongings, Hannibal noted the scent of blood on them and merely gave Randall a grateful nod as Jimmy led them to the second floor to Margo's new suite of rooms.

His Seneschal walked into the kitchen as Hannibal sipped a glass of blood wine. "My Lord, Mason Verger has lodged a complaint about werewolves attacking him and a few of his people on his estate."

"Considering that Randall and his brethren are well trained to control themselves, I believe that they must have been provoked into defending themselves while following a directive from me," Hannibal said, smiling widely. "So if Mason Verger has a grievance against the werewolves, I am in no mood to hear false accounts against them. He is more than welcome to take his complaints to Alpha Crawford, but I doubt that the Alpha will look kindly on false accounts against his own pack."

“As you wish, my lord,” his Seneschal said, bowing his head politely with a small, satisfied grin.

“One more thing, Frederick,” Hannibal said, setting his glass down on the counter. “I would like for Mason Verger to give up the names of the butchers involved in Miss Verger’s non-consensual medical procedures and I would like them charged formally in both my court and with the human law enforcement division. I would also like Mason Verger fined. **Heavily.** I believe Miss Verger is due 85% of the family’s entire estate as an appropriate reparation.”

“It would be my pleasure to take on this task personally, my lord.”

Hannibal chuckled, enjoying his Seneschal’s bloodthirstiness. “Thank you, Frederick.”

Jimmy walked into the kitchen, carrying a large silver tray with an assortment of empty bowls and cups. He smiled at Hannibal, heading for the sink.

“I’m glad to see Miss Verger is finally eating,” Hannibal remarked, looking at the water sprite.

“She did today, my lord. She told me about her favorite dishes so I’ll do my best to make them for her. Spoil her a little. It seems to me that she hasn’t gotten a lot of kind attention, even growing up rich and on a big estate. Maybe because of it.”

“I know it was inconsiderate of me to add Miss Verger to the household without speaking to you first,” he said, looking at the water sprite as he meticulously examined each dish before loading the dishwasher.

“The more the merrier, I say,” he said, looking over his shoulder to smile at Hannibal. “Great big house like this should be filled with all sorts of life and noise. It’s not natural for the manor house to be unused. There are so many wonderful rooms here, my lord. It wouldn’t bother me if you invited more people to stay with you. You know, like Mr. Graham.”

Hannibal chuckled as he took a sip of blood. “Will is quite an independent man. I doubt he’d be interested in living here.”

“Well, he’s here often enough, he might as well just stay,” Jimmy said, chuckling to himself. “But if you’re looking to increase your household in the future, my lord, I’ll gladly have them, too.”

“Thank you, I’ll keep that in mind. Perhaps with less dire circumstances than the one Miss Verger found herself in. Tell me, Jimmy, how is she doing today?”

Jimmy let out a deep sigh. “She’s still distressed, but I’m keeping an eye on her. Anthony is keeping her company right now and amusing her with his stories and gossip.”

“I shall have to ask if she would like to speak to a counselor,” Hannibal said, immediately thinking of Alana.

Jimmy started up the dishwasher. “I think that would be wise, my lord. She did ask if you were free. I think she’d like to speak to you.”

“Very well, I have some time now. I’ll go up and visit with her,” Hannibal said, feeling Jimmy’s approval from across the room.

Upstairs, Hannibal had given her a guest room that was also a suite. She had a private bathroom, a sitting area, a small balcony, and a large bedroom. As he made his way towards her door, he could hear Anthony’s boisterous laughter and Margot’s softer giggles. The door to the sitting room was open and Hannibal knocked politely, gaining their attention.

“Hannibal,” Anthony said, smiling widely at him. “I was just telling Margot about that party you threw last Halloween where I dressed up as Count Dracula.”

“An embarrassment to our vampire brethren,” Hannibal said, stepping into the room. “But you were quite charming.”

“I’ll get out of your hair,” Anthony said, reaching out to squeeze Margot’s hand. “Come find me downstairs if you want company later.”

“Thank you, Anthony,” she said, smiling up at him.

Hannibal stroked his hand fondly across Anthony’s warm cheek and then stepped into the sitting room, taking a seat by Margot on the love seat. “How are you, my dear?”

She sighed, looking down at her hands in her lap. “I’m feeling much better, my lord. Thank you.”

“If you’re going to live in my home, perhaps you could call me Hannibal. I’d like for you to think of this as your home for as long as you need.”

Margot stared at him with large doe-like eyes. “Thank you, Hannibal.”

Hannibal nodded, gazing at her for a long moment. “Can you tell me what provoked your brother this time?”

She gave him a wry grin. “It doesn’t take much to provoke Mason, but this time, I think I went too far.”

Hannibal thought that she was quite strong. The last time the Verger siblings appeared before him at court was because Mason had accused her of trying to kill him. Hannibal had read both of them and realized that Margot had tried to kill him because Mason had raped her. Again. There was no remorse in the ogre, more creature than human, and Hannibal had decided not to decide on either side, curious to see what each would do. He had no doubt that Mason would try to punish her, but he wondered what Margot would try to do. He believed,

with just the right encouragement, she would find it in herself to react viscerally. *Viciously.* Hmm...perhaps it was still too soon to tell.

"How so?"

"I got pregnant," she said, taking a deep breath and putting her hand on her lower belly. "I threatened his inheritance and legacy. So he got me back by taking away the one thing I could do."

Hannibal frowned. "I don't understand how that could be a threat to his fortune. Are you not also an equal heir to the Verger estate?"

She laughed bitterly, shaking her head. "My family bloodline is ogres. My father and my brother have very strong ogre genes, but I don't. I barely registered as an ogre and my father thought I would weaken the bloodline. *'Not good enough stock to be a real Verger.'* That's what he'd always say about me. So he made Mason the sole heir. Only a male Verger would inherit the Verger fortune. If Mason died without a son, then everything would go to the Trump Liberty Church. So I went out, picked up a guy, and got pregnant. I was going to go to Europe and hide out for the rest of my pregnancy until the baby was born. But Mason found out. Maybe his men went through my trash and saw the pregnancy tests, I don't know. But they arranged for me to have a car accident and then the surgery."

Hannibal hummed, thoughtfully, gazing at her. "Thank you for telling me, Margot. I assure you, I won't let this go. I've asked my Seneschal to press charges against the doctors who did this to you. As well as forcing Mason to turn over 85% of the Verger estate to you as reparation."

Margot gasped, her mouth parted as she stared at him with wide blue eyes. "My lord...Hannibal, I don't know what to say?"

"I assume that it will be a long and ugly fight," Hannibal said, smirking. "But my Seneschal and my lawyers enjoy a good fight. The uglier it gets, the more cruel and brutal my lawyers can be. Feel assured that Mason and his ilk won't escape my punishment for their crimes against you."

“That sounds...quite extreme.”

Hannibal reached out and patted her hand. “Some acts of cruelty should be met by even more extreme acts of cruelty.” He grinned, seeing the pleasure cross her face. Perhaps not too soon after all. She may only need a little careful grooming to awaken her darker ogre appetites. “Do you know why you weren’t able to kill your brother, Margot?”

She snorted, looking away, shamefaced. “Because I’m weak and stupid.”

“No. You are neither weak nor stupid, Margot. It’s because you loved him. And your father. Despite how cruel they were to you, you loved them both. You desperately wanted to be loved,” Hannibal said, meeting her eyes. “There are others who can love you, Margot; others that you can love, too. And if you would like to take everything away from Mason, there are ways to do that, too.”

Margot’s face flushed prettily and she smiled, looking at her lap again. “Thank you, Hannibal. Your friendship means the world to me.”

“Good. I’m glad to be of service,” Hannibal said, smiling widely.

***

Hannibal pressed Will against the door of his office and kissed his mouth, delighting in the way that Will wriggled against him, moaning softly.

“Han--Hannibal!” He protested, giggling slightly. “We can’t do this here! It’s my office!”

“Are you expecting any students to knock on your door?”

“No, but -- “ Will moaned again when Hannibal sucked on his earlobe, nipping it with his blunt teeth. “Ohhhh...please, Hannibal!”

“Shhhh...quiet now, my darling,” Hannibal said, sliding his hand down the front of Will’s body, cupping the hard cock under his khaki pants. He unzipped Will quickly and moved down to his knees, looking up at the incubus demon greedily. “I’ll make this fast.”

Will barked out a gruff laugh. “What, like fast food?”

Hannibal rolled his eyes and reached into the opened zipper, pulling out the firm cock with his hand. He sucked on the head, savoring the salty, bitter taste of his pre-come, and stared up at Will.

Hands clutched at his shoulders, wrinkling the wool fabric of his suit, but Hannibal was relentless as he sucked and teased with his tongue, taking Will’s cock further into his mouth and deep into his throat.

“Fuck, this isn’t going to take long,” Will hissed, biting back his moans. His hips shifted and thrust against Hannibal’s hands, trying to push his cock faster into Hannibal’s mouth.

He obliged, letting Will have his way, swallowing each time he felt the bulbous head of Will’s cock breech his throat. He groaned as Will lost control, fucking Hannibal’s mouth with short, quick thrusts, until Hannibal could taste his come coat his tongue.

Will shuddered as Hannibal licked him clean, panting breathlessly as he fell against the door. “Christ...that was fast. I feel like I’m going to pass out.”

“Mmmmm...not yet, darling,” Hannibal said, moving further up on his knees and pulling out the shirt tails of his very ugly green plaid shirt to reveal a path of soft belly. He felt his fangs pushing from his gums and he licked the warm skin and pierced his flesh with his fangs.

Will pressed his hand against his mouth, stifling his pained groans, and clutched a handful of Hannibal’s hair as Hannibal drank deeply of Will’s familiar blood. He didn’t need much, just a few mouthfuls, and he licked the wounds clean to heal them.

Hannibal stood up and leaned against Will's body, kissing him gently. He let out a pleased sound when Will licked into Hannibal's mouth, his tongue sliding against the fangs sensually. Hannibal shuddered and pressed his forehead against Will's forehead, chuckling lowly.

"I'm sorry that I cannot stay longer, but I have business in the city," he said, kissing Will's cheek.

Will snorted, rolling his eyes as he pushed Hannibal back gently. "Yeah, I see how it is, Hannibal. I'm just drive-thru."

"You will never be 'drive-thru,' Will. If I can't indulge in you fully, then you are definitely an aperitif."

Will laughed, throwing back his head and revealing his long neck. Hannibal was mightily tempted. "So you're just using me to stimulate your appetite."

"You stimulate more than just my appetite," he said, kissing Will again, taking his time until the incubus demon was sighing into his mouth and melting against Hannibal's body. "Come to dinner soon, I miss you."

Dark blue eyes peered at him, looking sleepy and satisfied. "Tonight?"

"Any night."

***

An hour later, after freshening up in a nearby restroom, Hannibal walked across the GWU campus to wait patiently outside Alana's office, knowing that she was with a patient. He maintained a polite distance as Alana escorted her patient out of the small anteroom.

“Hannibal, I’m so pleased to see you,” she said, her smile wide and genuine. “What brings you downtown?”

“I actually wanted to seek your professional advice on a personal matter.”

“Please come in,” she said, showing him into her office. He found it pleasant and relaxing. Alana had decorated the room with warm shades of blue and green, dark woods, and plush fabric armchairs and couches. She showed him to one of the armchairs and she sat down on the couch, facing him. “What can I do?”

“I have a new house guest, Miss Margot Verger, perhaps you’ve heard of her.”

Alana smiled, nodding. “Yes, she’s in the social papers quite a lot. She runs a lot of charities and hosts a lot of fundraisers. I went to one, about a year ago, and met her once.” She paused, cocking her head slightly. “Did you say that she’s your new house guest?”

“She asked for asylum and for my protection.”

“Is she okay? I mean...obviously, she’s not okay if she had to ask you for protection,” Alana said, frowning slightly. “How can I help?”

Hannibal smiled, warmed by her compassion. “I believe she could use a friendly ear. I’m far too close to her, and in good conscience, I couldn’t act as her psychiatrist anyway. But she could benefit from therapy. I’d like to introduce you to her and see if you could take her as a client, as a personal favor to me.”

“Of course, Hannibal,” she said, reaching for her leather-covered journal and opening the pages to her calendar. “I’m happy to meet her after my clients or after lectures at GW. I don’t mind a Saturday morning meeting if that works better for her.”

“Thank you, my dear,” he said, gazing at her. “I appreciate your flexibility. Why don’t you come to dinner this weekend and I can make the introduction in an informal, neutral

manner?”

Alana’s eyes brightened. “I’d love to.”

***

Very rarely did Hannibal step into one of his investigations; mostly it was because Hannibal couldn’t afford to be so personally involved. As vampire king, it was his right to make laws and to decide on civil and criminal cases in the supernatural community. A being of his stature wasn’t expected to be out in the field, so to speak, and had a variety of allies to do the work for him.

But Hannibal liked to keep his hand in; and he was very interested in the warlock, Tobias Budge. He had asked Randall to place a small tracer on Tobias’s vehicle and Hannibal watched on his tablet screen as Tobias moved throughout the city, stopping for long periods of time in a variety of neighborhoods, until he had driven into the more rural areas of Maryland.

“Randall, it’s time. Please bring one of the lesser known vehicles to the house. We have a private errand to run,” Hannibal said, into his phone.

“Yes, my lord, I will be there in ten minutes.”

Hannibal closed the cover to his tablet, putting it inside of his coat pocket, and stepped out of the house to wait for Randall. The werewolf picked him up in a silver Ford Fusion hybrid, and Hannibal slipped into the passenger seat.

“Drive for a few miles in a circuitous manner to ensure that we are not followed,” he said, opening the cover of his tablet to see that Tobias had not moved from his current spot.

Randall drove silently throughout the city, turning through a variety of streets, and keeping his eyes on his rearview mirror. “My lord, we are not being followed.”

“Very good,” he said, showing the tablet screen to Randall. “It appears that Mr. Budge has been out on an errand.”

Randall looked at the location marker and set it into his phone’s GPS. “We can be there in about forty-five minutes, my lord.”

The ride was quiet and smooth, the radio tuned to a classic music station for Hannibal. Randall was not the sort to chit-chat, but most werewolves were stoic by nature. They were keen observers and protectors, keeping tight control of their animalistic urges. Alpha Jack Crawford’s pack was well respected in many supernatural communities. The Alpha had faced down challengers and wore his battle scars proudly. He was not an easy man or werewolf to put down; and he ruled his pack with firm but affectionate authority. Jack was a loyal ally, and he would make a formidable enemy, one that Hannibal could ill afford at this time.

It was near midnight when they found the tracer marker. Randall parked the car off the side of the road, hidden by large bushes and trees.

“He’s close,” Randall whispered, scenting the air. “This way, my lord.”

Quietly, Hannibal followed the werewolf through the woods, keeping their scents down wind. A warlock didn’t have senses like werewolves and vampires, but Hannibal knew to be cautious all the same. About ten miles into the deep woods, Hannibal saw the blue-white magic fire and two shadowed figures.

“Stay here,” Hannibal said, putting his hand on Randall’s shoulder. “Keep your presence secret unless he attacks me.”

“Yes, my lord,” Randall said, begrudgingly.

Hannibal patted the werewolf on the shoulder and moved through the woods, entering the small clearing and giving away his position by stepping on a stick. He tucked his hands into the pockets of his coat, gazing at the kneeling young man with white-blond hair.

“Ahhh...Lord Lecter,” Tobias Budge said, his voice deep and melodic. “I was wondering when you would come calling.”

Hannibal strolled leisurely towards the young man and then glanced at Tobias. “He is of the fairy class.”

“Beautiful creatures, aren’t they?” Tobias said, holding the large knife in his right hand. “He’s still fresh, my lord, if you’d like to have the first taste.”

He felt his fangs throb under his gums. No doubt that the fairy would be delectable and he was tempted to have him.

“Not tonight, Mr. Budge.”

“It would be a shame to waste it,” he said, grabbing a fistful of the white-blond hair and jerking back the fairy’s head so that Hannibal could see his face...and the long line of his slender throat. “He wouldn’t deny you. He wouldn’t deny either of us.”

The fairy whimpered, terrified eyes looking up at Hannibal and recognizing him. “My lord -- “

“Hush now!” Tobias said, pushing the fairy to the ground. “Your pleas fall on deaf ears tonight.”

Hannibal bit his tongue and sucked on the taste of his own blood. “It’s been centuries since anyone followed the old rituals. What did you hope to gain by slaughtering our own kind?”

“Your attention...and your friendship, of course,” he said, looking at Hannibal. “They were done to honor you, my lord.”

“But why take their glands?” Hannibal said, staring at the warlock. “Did you want to gain my favor by stealing their glands to enhance yourself in my eyes?”

Tobias frowned, staring at him. “Do you know how long it took me to find those old rituals? I performed them to perfection. I even learned how to remove each gland, cleaner than any surgeon. I earned their powers. And when I take this fairy’s glands, I’ll be perfect.”

“But not perfect enough for me.”

“You refuse my gifts?”

Hannibal sneered at the pathetic warlock. “They were not gifts to me, but for your own selfish ambitions. I do not feel honored, Tobias. In fact, I find you pitiful and crass. This is debasement, not honor.”

A white light formed around Tobias’s hands as he glared at Hannibal, muttering under his breath. But before he could use his power, Randall shot him in the forehead. Hannibal looked over his shoulder to see Randall holstering his gun.

“It was a shame that he had to die so quickly,” Hannibal said, keeping his tone light.

“I never liked magic users,” Randall said, checking to see that the warlock was truly dead. “We should just bury him here and be done with it, my lord.”

“Excellent. Would you start digging? I’ll take care of the young man.” Hannibal said, meeting Randall’s dark eyes.

“Yes, my lord,” he said, letting the claws form on the fingers of both hands. He walked a few steps away and began digging the dirt, grunting as he worked.

Hannibal knelt beside the fairy and held him close, running his hand over the tear-streaked face. “You are...so lovely. What is your name?”

“Tim...Tim Woodland,” the fairy said, blinking up at Hannibal. “Thank you for not letting that sick fuck hurt me.”

Hannibal gave him a small smile, inhaling deeply and taking in the fairy’s scent. He smelled pure, so innocent. It melted a part of Hannibal’s dead heart to hold him so close. “How old are you?”

“Twenty, my lord,” Tim said, trying to sit up on his own. “Could you untie me now?”

“You know me, don’t you?”

“You’re the vampire king.”

He held the fairy’s chin, tilting his head back so that Hannibal could see his smooth and lovely neck. “It’s been hours since I had any blood. Would you kindly share a little bit of your own?”

“And then you’ll take me home?”

“Anything you desire,” he said, letting his fangs drop inside his mouth. He was salivating and was at the limit of his patience.

“Okay…”

“Close your eyes,” he murmured, leaning down to lick against the warm skin, feeling the muscles tense against the flat of his tongue.

He bit down quickly and deeply, holding the strong, young body in his arms as the fairy moaned in a combination of pain and fear and pleasure. He whimpered, struggling futilely against Hannibal, but as his heart beat faster, the quicker Hannibal was able to drink. He hungrily stole several deep mouthfuls of fresh blood, savoring the warmth of it as it slipped down his throat. It had been a long time since he had tasted fairy blood, especially one this pure and sweet, and Hannibal fed on him greedily, slurping noisily and without care, losing every bit of composure as he drained the fairy in a dozen long, gluttonous swallows.

It was over so quickly, Hannibal reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a handkerchief, wiping his mouth and chin of sticky, wet blood. He picked up the dead fairy in his arms and carried him to the deep hole that Randall had dug. Tobias Budge's body was already at the bottom and Hannibal handed the fairy off to Randall to place him on top of Budge.

He stood by the makeshift grave as Randall filled it with dirt, packing it down every few feet so that there would be no evidence. It would be too deep for any of the carnivores that hunted in the forest to dig up.

"Mark the grave, please," he said, as Randall stomped on top of the dirt.

The werewolf unzipped his pants and let loose a heavy stream of urine over the grave, marking it as his territory. No one would disturb this resting place now.

"Thank you, Randall," he said, feeling so warm and too heavy from his special meal. It was only when he drained a living being of all their blood that he could feel *almost* human again. He felt centuries younger, stronger, faster - the energy inside of him thrumming and surging through his veins.

"It was my pleasure to serve you, my lord," Randall said, meeting Hannibal's eyes.

"You will be especially rewarded for your services tonight."

Randall bowed his head, a small smile on his lips. "Thank you, my lord."

They walked back to Randall's vehicle in companionable silence. He could feel Randall's excitement radiating off of him. Theirs was a special bond. Hannibal knew the secret desires in Randall's heart; how he longed to set his werewolf free, to gorge himself on the blood and meat of humans. When Randall performed a service for Hannibal, such as the one tonight, Hannibal ensured that Randall had the opportunity to kill like an animal. He would find victims for Randall and watch him hunt and rend and feast. The werewolf was beautiful in an unspeakable way; and Hannibal joined in the chase joyfully.

"We must speak of Miriam Lass," Hannibal said, delicately.

"She's a good pack mate," Randall said, giving Hannibal a look.

"She is a good pack mate, but she is suspicious of me -- of us," he said, sighing deeply. "She watches me too closely and carefully. I don't want to think about the consequences of removing her from my household."

"At least wait until these deaths go away, my lord."

Hannibal nodded, knowing that he couldn't move against Miriam right now and not on his own. "Very well, Randall, I will give it deeper consideration. I believe she has the potential to be a very good house protector."

"Yes, my lord."

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

> Author's Note: Thanks for being patient! Whew! There's more worldbuilding in this chapter, but stay for the end where Hannibal and Will get a chance to be close again.

Hannibal watched Frederick's expressive face as he and Randall relayed the events of the night with Tobias Budge and the lovely fairy. His Seneschal pressed his lips together and nodded slowly, lifting his eyes to look at Hannibal, doing his best to keep his dismay under control.

"You...drained a fairy...and buried him with the warlock in an unmarked grave," Frederick said, his voice cracking.

Hannibal was still experiencing a bone deep lassitude of being completely full. He sank into the comfortable armchair, his hands tapping on the arm rests as the energy and adrenaline of the feeding invoked a different sort of need.

"I admit that it was impulsive of me."

"My Lord, that puts us in a precarious position, not only with the warlocks but with the fae classes as well," Frederick said, tiredly. He rubbed his forehead with his hand and squinted his eyes, staring at the carpeting under his feet. "If anyone should find out…"

"No one will." Hannibal wasn't bothered by it, too sated to care at the moment. "You must excuse me, Frederick, but I am quite heavy with the feeling of my meal and completely distracted."

He was looking forward to slaking some of his excess energy on Anthony. He would have preferred Will, but Hannibal lacked the patience to wait for his lovely demon lover.

“I know it’s not my place to presume, but I’m distressed by this news.”

“I realize that my actions against the warlock and the fairy were...careless,” he said, getting to his feet and nodding his head at Randall to dismiss him. “Rest assured, Randall and I have erased our tracks. Their remains will never be found. And now, I will wish you a very good morning and ask that I am not to be disturbed.”

Frederick bowed his head in compliance. “And what shall I report to Agent Katz?”

“That our investigation into the matter was unsuccessful,” he said, simply. “I rather like Agent Katz. Invite her for dinner in the next few days. I would like to know her better. I think she would make a perfect companion for Will, especially in his work with the legislation reforms.”

“And what about Miriam?”

Hannibal exchanged a look with Randall, and he turned and smiled at Frederick. “Ms. Lass is far too ambitious for her own good and doesn’t have the temperament I need to serve in my household. I think she requires a bit more life experience; and to be honest, I am far too fond of Randall and wish his service to return here. Bedelia will not be pleased, but I’m sure that Alpha Crawford can provide her with a suitable pack member.”

Frederick nodded, tapping on the screen of his iPad. “I’ll take care of the details, my Lord. Have a good rest.”

***

Hannibal was sitting at the dining table, sipping a glass of blood wine, and reading the latest article on the Tattle Crime website. The journalist, Freddie Lounds, was certainly adept at writing purple prose. The writing was amateurish and tactless, but Hannibal was an avid fan of her investigative work. Her focus was on crimes in the supernatural community, which was odd because she was human, but despite her disadvantages, Ms. Lounds made a number

of correct conclusions. He was particularly interested in following her work on the murders by Tobias Budge, wanting to keep an eye on any new developments.

He narrowed his eyes, remembering her false accusations against Will and Will's snarky dismissal of their one night stand. She had not exposed Will publicly and had kept a wide berth from him. There was only a brief mention of Will working on reforms to improve the lot of the demon classes, but it wasn't as interesting as her other investigative work. Hannibal considered if Ms. Lounds posed a threat to him, and what would he do if he was faced with making a decision on her existence. Take her blood and kill her, of course; the alternative -- Turning her -- would no doubt seal his demise. Though, if Hannibal was honest with himself, Freddie Lounds would make for a fascinating vampire who would love to wield the power that came from being of his bloodline. No doubt Chiyoh would kill Freddie if Hannibal ever Turned her.

Margot swept into the dining room, holding a large bouquet of flowers in her hands. "Good afternoon, Hannibal."

He grinned, looking up at her. He was pleased by her newfound happiness, no doubt due to her growing closeness and friendship with Alana. "Good afternoon, Margot. What lovely flowers."

"Thank you," she said, demurely. "They're from Alana. I just wanted to make sure that there was plenty of fresh water in the vase and take it up to my room."

Hannibal merely nodded his head in approval and watched as Margot hummed a cheerful tune, going into the kitchen. He looked down at the screen of his iPad, extremely pleased with himself.

He sipped his blood wine and looked up when Margot returned to the dining room. "It's good to see you so happy, Margot."

"Alana is very kind to me," she murmured, her cheeks flushing slightly.

“You are more than welcomed to invite her to visit you here,” he said, softly. “Alana has always felt comfortable coming here, so I hope that you’ll continue to extend her an invitation.”

“That’s very good of you, Hannibal. I don’t want to be an inconvenience anymore than I already am.”

He got to his feet, picking up his iPad and glass. “Nonsense. You’re my family now, Margot, and you’ll never be an inconvenience. In fact, my children will be arriving in just a couple of weeks to spend the summer here. I hope that you and Alana will help me welcome them.”

“Of course, Hannibal. I’ll be so delighted to meet them,” she said, smiling up at him. “Will they stay at the house?”

Hannibal chuckled, shaking his head. “Frederick has made arrangements to rent properties that are nearby. They may be my children, but we all desire our own spaces. Frederick has the full schedule - a few family dinners and public events. Please check with him so you and Alana can find some free time with us.”

“I will,” she said, brightly.

“And, if it is in your interest, I would love to have you and Alana join me in my opera box for the season’s first performance.”

Margot chuckled, nodding. “I’m pretty sure Alana would love it, though I’m not a fan of opera. But we’ll both be there.”

“Wonderful,” he said, smiling. “Will would enjoy having you as a partner-in-crime. You can both get into mischief together while Alana and I weep in our seats.”

***

Hannibal walked down the stairs and took the hallway to his study, when he saw Jimmy carrying a tray holding what looked like a hearty meal. “Is Margot taking her meal in her room?”

Jimmy smirked, wiggling his eyebrows. “It’s for Anthony. Apparently, he’s still feeling a bit sore and worn out and asked if I could bring him up some comfort food.”

“Please keep an eye on him for me, Jimmy. If he is in pain, call for the doctor to visit him at home.”

“You spoil him,” Jimmy said, teasingly. “He just wants a little bit of attention. Though if you ask me, he got enough attention from you this morning. There was such a ruckus, it completely disturbed my morning water bath.”

Hannibal chuckled, walking towards his study. “I’m sure I have no idea what you are speaking of.”

He was quite pleased with Anthony and enjoyed the few hours spent in his bed. He still bit Anthony several times, even though he didn’t require the blood. He knew that Anthony enjoyed the intensity and pain of the bite with his pleasure. Hannibal knew that he was distracted by Will and had neglected Anthony; so the morning hours together reinforced their special bond and reassured Anthony’s continued place in his life.

Moving to sit behind his large desk, he turned on his computer and opened the video call app, waiting the few moments for the number to connect. Hannibal leaned into his leather chair, crossing his legs, his hands resting on top of his knee. He smiled as he watched his second childe, Francis, bow lowly to him on the screen.

“Father, it has been more than a year since we last spoke,” Francis said, his voice deep with calm affection. “You look well.”

Hannibal carefully accounted for Francis's appearance. He was tall and broad, well muscled under his neat black sweater and collared shirt. His dark blond hair was cut short in a precise military cut. He was handsome in a feral sense; there was beauty in his wildness. He looked healthy and well fed, robust and satisfied. Like his childe, Chiyoh, who was Regent of Asia in Tokyo, Francis was Regent to Hannibal's European kingdom in London.

"Thank you, Francis, as do you." He gave a warm smile to his childe. "I will endeavor to reach out to you and Chiyoh more frequently in the future."

Francis's stoic expression looked out at him, waiting patiently. Hannibal was pleased that the scar on his upper lip had not healed completely in his immortality.

Hannibal and Chiyoh had encountered Francis during their travels through Asia, especially in Thailand during the golden age of the early 1900s. They had heard of a fierce combat fighter named Red Dragon and attended several fights to watch this peculiar American. There were a number of fascinating rumors surrounding the fighter; but it was his ruthless skills in what was called muay, a new form of fighting, that caught everyone's attention.

"He is brutish," she commented, raising her eyebrow at Hannibal's interest.

Hannibal chuckled, watching the fighter avidly. "You have been an only childe for far too long, Chiyoh."

She gave him a narrowed look. "What makes him so interesting?"

"His transformation will be nothing less than beautiful if I Turn him into a vampire," he said, leaning forward in his seat as Francis used a mixture of skill and ferocity against his opponent. They were well matched in size and physicality, but Francis had a will Hannibal had never encountered.

"Shall we invite him for dinner?"

“He could be our dinner.”

Hannibal smiled at her. “You will always be my first childe, Chiyoh. Can you not find generosity in your heart to accept him into our family?”

“If you must,” she said, scoffing. “Though I cannot see why you want him.”

Francis suspected that they were different from the very first meeting. “What do you want from me? My blood? Blood is cheap.”

Chiyoh hissed at him. “Blood is a gift of the gods that replenish our kind.”

Francis gave her a steady look, his scarred lip pulling away from his gum line, giving him a frightening sneer. If he thought to intimidate Chiyoh, then Francis would be sorely disappointed.

Up close, Hannibal could see that he was scarred and tortured, battling with the dragon inside of him. It didn’t take much effort to bring him into their family; and Hannibal Turned him shortly after, both he and Chiyoh teaching Francis everything he needed to know to thrive.

“How do you feel?”

Francis stood on the balcony of their rented home, his eyes closed. His inhaled deeply and slowly, opening himself to the night. “I can sense everything. It is as if I am one with every living creature.”

“Your becoming is radiant, my son.”

And after several decades, Chiyoh eventually warmed up to her brother. In the 1930s, the two of them disappeared off together, exploring the world; and when Hannibal found his children

again, they had bonded as siblings and allies.

"The world needs order; our kind needs guidance," Chiyoh remarked, sitting across from Hannibal as they sipped blood from handmade teacups.

"The supernatural creatures are crying out for leadership. Humans are destructive and only want to wage war amongst each other out of fear and greed and bloodlust," Francis said, hands clasped on his lap. "They will soon destroy creatures like us next."

"We are already so small in number. Many have died or live in hiding," Chiyoh said, looking at him. "Father, you are one of the oldest of our kind. They will listen to you."

"How are the preparations for your summer visit?"

"Your Seneschal has been very thorough with the schedule. I will be bringing my mate and two guards. We do not need to inconvenience you."

Hannibal smiled, very pleased. Francis's human mate was a beautiful woman named Reba. She had not wanted to be Turned yet, but had taken enough of Francis's blood to be bonded to him deeply. He found her to be a remarkable human - compassionate, bright and independent, and sensual to the senses. Hannibal was secretly pleased that Reba wasn't a vampire yet, which would cure her of her blindness. He knew that Reba didn't believe her visual impairment needed a cure; and he respected her choice, even though he knew Francis was secretly anxious to Turn her.

"My son, it will never be an inconvenience to have you and Reba close by," he said, softly. "If I could find a way to have my family near me always and still be able to rule the kingdoms, I would do so. For now, we each serve our roles best where we are."

Francis bowed his head in acquiescence. "Then Reba and I are looking forward to our visit soon, Father." One corner of his lips quirked, the only sign of his amusement. "Chiyoh has remarked that you may be close to a mating of your own. Will we have the honor of meeting your future mate?"

Hannibal grinned, raising his eyebrow. “I’m afraid that we haven’t discussed it. It is too soon to tell.”

“As you say, Father,” he said, looking into the camera.

“Safe travels, Francis.”

“Thank you,” he said, reaching up to end the video call.

Hannibal leaned back in his chair and sighed deeply, still feeling the echo of fondness for his childe and his own sentimental nature. He had been a father for over a century, and even now, he felt such a deep connection to the two of his bloodline. He had never wanted or needed a third childe, though he did sometimes fantasize about what it would be like if he could have a Regent in Baltimore while he and Will traveled the world together. There was so much that Hannibal wanted to show Will, and to see the world through Will’s eyes.

It was a pity that Will wasn’t mortal; he would happily Turn Will for the asking and revel in his blood lust. Hannibal was certain that if they fully bonded, he could help Will fully realize his incubus powers; how ecstatic Hannibal would feel to witness Will’s total becoming.

*****

“Please stop fussing with it,” Hannibal said, reaching out to take Will’s hand, preventing him from tugging on the bowtie of his tuxedo.

Will threw him a pained look as Margot and Alana chuckled softly as they watched Will with affection.

“You know I hate wearing this monkey suit,” Will said, letting out a deep sigh and sitting back on the leather seat of the limo that Hannibal had hired for the evening.

“But you look so handsome,” Margot said, excitedly. “You’re going to turn a lot of heads tonight, Will. The gossipmongers will be talking about this for weeks, maybe months.”

Will made a face, turning to look at Hannibal for confirmation.

Hannibal smiled. “Yes, you look very handsome.”

He was deeply amused by Will’s side eye glance and the flush on his cheeks. It was a mark of the succubus and incubus demon classes that they were born beautiful and alluring in order to lure in others to seduce and feed from them; a terrible tradeoff for some who believed that people only desired them for their physical looks. He knew that Will tried to hide his beauty, never getting too close to anyone who wanted him, and taking only enough to stay alive. Hannibal didn’t believe it was any way to live. In the past few weeks, Will had grown more robust with the steady diet of sexual energy, and Hannibal saw him changed for the better.

“You will turn many heads tonight for your sheer beauty, but also because of your supernatural class.”

“And because you’re with Hannibal,” Alana noted, seriously. “The official start of the opera season kicks off a lot of wonderful social events. Hannibal is known for being a bachelor and that he brings friends and companions as his date. This is the first time he’s brought a significant other. There’s going to be a lot of jealousy and hurt feelings at his choice.”

“Because I’m a lowly demon, not good enough for the vampire king?” Will said, raising his eyebrow.

“Our society is built on a bunch of snobs, Will,” Margot said, shaking her head. “They don’t think demons and trolls and werewolves are equal to them. A lot of them believe that humans are beneath them. And many believe that Hannibal shouldn’t be around certain classes. They like their exclusivity.”

“It’s a bunch of bull,” Will said, frowning.

“It is not only about supernatural classes,” Hannibal said, looking at him. “But what it signifies to the community.”

He wondered if Will understood what it truly meant for him to be by Hannibal’s side. Did he know that if he took Will as his mate that it would elevate him to be equal to Hannibal? That the community would have to bow and prostrate themselves to Will. Such a partnership would shake the very foundation of their society, much of it due to Hannibal’s own prejudices, but even an old vampire like him could change.

Alana chuckled, leaning against Margot. “Hannibal has no equal, Will. Only one person would ever be his equal in the eyes of the supernatural community.”

He watched as Will took that in, tucking his chin down and staring at their clasped hands between them. He glanced up at Hannibal and licked his lips nervously, sighing through his nose. Hannibal thought that Will understood perfectly; though perhaps he wasn’t quite ready to accept such a role. For now.

“The Vergers have been long time supporters of the arts, but my father and Mason never attended these types of events. They didn’t care for it and I’m sure that members of Baltimore society were glad that they stayed away,” Margot said, softly. “Trolls aren’t usually accepted into certain social circles, no matter how much money there is to the Verger name. But Hannibal has always been kind to my mother and to me. He always welcomed us and treated us as equals. He’s the reason why I’m welcomed to social events and why my charity receives a lot of public support.”

“You and your mother gained respect through your hard work and your generosity,” Hannibal said, smiling at the young woman.

“They were quite harsh to us,” Margot said, looking at Will. “There was a lot of nasty rumors and speculation as to why Hannibal, the vampire king, would deign to show us any kindness. It got quite ugly and Hannibal had to put a stop to it. No one wants to upset the vampire king.”

“I cannot abide rudeness,” he said, simply. Will gave him a knowing grin.

“So don’t be surprised if you receive a cold welcome or if you overhear nasty remarks. Just ignore them,” she said, kindly. “Alana and I won’t let anyone treat you badly.”

Alana nodded agreeably. “We’re your buffers tonight, Will.”

Hannibal watched as Will mulled it over, pressing his lips together. He raised their clasped hand and kissed the back of Will’s hand gently. Blue eyes turned to look at Hannibal and Hannibal smiled.

“It’s true that there will be great speculation about you, Will. I’m afraid that I was not very sympathetic to the demon classes and people have taken that cue from me to behave poorly themselves. But you are no lamb walking into a crowd of wolves. You have my permission to lash out as you wish, be it with your claws or your words,” he said, chuckling softly as Will rolled his eyes, chuffing out a laugh.

“So you really are just showing me off and testing me to see how I’d take it,” he said, wryly.

“Yes.”

Will snorted. “Look, thanks for all the support and everything, but I can handle myself. People have been looking down at me and treating me like the crap on the bottom of their shoes pretty much all my life. It’ll take more than a bunch of rich and entitled people gossiping about me to get under my skin.”

The limo stopped in front of the opera house and the driver opened the door as Will and Hannibal slipped out first. Hannibal turned and held his hand out to Margot and then to Alana, helping them out of the vehicle. Margot quickly took Will’s arm, both of them ducking their heads and whispering conspiratorially as they made their way up the steps to the main entrance.

Hannibal offered his arm to Alana. “It seems that the adventure is ours tonight, Alana. We have both lost our dates to their mischief.”

Alana laughed softly, taking Hannibal's arm with her hand. She looked beautiful and carefree, eyes dancing with genuine pleasure at seeing Margot and Will walking together.

"She'll take good care of him," she said, reassuringly.

"Am I that transparent?"

"I can tell that you care about Will," Alana murmured, smiling and nodding a polite greeting to the people around them as they bowed to Hannibal.

"I do," Hannibal said, softly. "Very much so."

She turned and looked up at him. "Do you have doubts about how Will feels about you?"

"I believe that he has doubts; I've not had a particularly good track record with his kind." He gazed down at her. "And what of you and Margot?"

She gave him a coy smile. "She's lovely and smart and compassionate. It's still early days yet, but I have a very good feeling about our new friendship."

He patted her hand. "I'm very glad, Alana. It's always been my hope that you would find happiness for yourself."

"Of course, I can't in good conscience be her unofficial therapist. We'll have to refer her to someone soon. But I'm sure you've already considered it," she said, raising her eyebrow at him.

Hannibal looked across the main floor to see Margot and Will at the bar, Margot waving to them prettily to get their attention. "I have a list of colleagues that I would like for you to

review and recommend to Margot."

Alana gave him a little nod, her lips pulling into a perfect smile, as they walked across the room. Hannibal nodded and greeted the attendees, a few of them bowing to him as he walked past. He didn't demand it, but accepted it graciously when he received it.

"Fresh blood for you," Will said, handing him the fluted glass with the deep red liquid.

"Thank you," he said, standing closer to Will as Alana slipped away to be near Margot. All around them, Hannibal could hear the steady buzz of whispers and feel the eyes of dozens of people on them.

"It's really beautiful in here," Will commented, looking up at the high ceilings decorated with beautiful blue lapis mosaic tiles. "I've never been inside. Tell me something interesting about this place."

Hannibal could have bitten him right then and there; Will knew that Hannibal enjoyed sharing anecdotes and asking Hannibal to tell him something was akin to teasing him. He stepped closer, putting his free hand on the small of Will's back, and leaned down to whisper in his ear. "The opera house was originally built in the 1850s by the wealthy Jamison family. The family was known in certain circles for being abolitionists and they helped slaves escape by using the basement of the opera house as a safe haven along the underground railroad from Baltimore into Pennsylvania. There are still tunnels that go throughout the city."

Will sipped his whiskey and turned to look at Hannibal, eyes crinkling in surprised humor. "That's amazing to know. Is that like historical fact or a little anecdote that only you know?"

He grinned. "Perhaps a bit of both."

They finished their drinks as Hannibal murmured quietly in Will's ear, sharing some gossip of his own. He pointed out a few people that he felt Will would enjoy the company of, planning for a dinner party, just an intimate group, where he could formally introduce Will as his future partner.

“Isn’t it weird that you host such lavish dinners and not eat the food?”

“Do you find it weird when we have dinner together?”

Will smiled, shrugging. “Well, not weird, but a different experience I guess. I appreciate that you cook for me and that you’re a vampire who only needs blood...but I guess it has been kind of odd for me to eat alone. I feel like it’s rude.”

Hannibal traced his fingertips along the collar of Will’s tuxedo shirt. “I like watching you eat the food that I prepare for you. I find it...erotic.”

“You would,” he said, raising his eyebrow.

A soft chime rang through the room and Hannibal placed his empty glass on a nearby table.

“Maybe I should get a refill before we go in?”

“Of course, but there is a waiter who serves the box and can bring you refreshments.”

Will nodded, finishing the rest of his drink and setting the empty glass next to Hannibal’s glass. “Okay, that’s good to know. Where are the ladies? We should probably go in.”

Right on cue, Margot and Alana stepped towards them and Hannibal enjoyed putting his hand on Will’s back, guiding him into the concert hall.

Hannibal’s box seats were on the left side of the room, the second box from the front, holding eight seats, which were divided into two rows of four seats. The red velvet seats were angled and staggered, the second row on a slight riser so that everyone in the box had a perfect view of the whole stage. Hannibal usually required service during the intermission, and had a

dedicated waiter who would stay nearby at his station if Hannibal or his guests needed something.

He was glad to see that Alpha Jack Crawford and his mate, Bella, had taken up Hannibal's invitation and were waiting for them to arrive. The werewolf looked regal and every bit the pack alpha in his black and white tuxedo, his broad barrel chest hidden under the elegant cut of his formal clothes. His mate looked stunning in her blue silk dress, her dark hair pulled back into a soft chignon. Hannibal was quite proud to present them to his companions.

"My Lord, it's good to see you again," Jack said, bowing to him.

"Jack. Bella. I think we can forego the formalities tonight. You are my guests. May I introduce my friends. Jack Crawford and his mate, Bella Crawford. Jack is Alpha of the Baltimore packs. This is Margot Verger. You know Alana, of course. And this is Will Graham."

He placed his hand on Will's shoulder, his thumb gently rubbing across his neck. He smiled at Jack and Bella, watching as they understood that Will was no mere friend.

"Will Graham?" Jack said, shaking Will's hand. "I've heard about the legislative reforms that you're spearheading. I have to say that your ideas are progressive."

"We've had a number of lively discussions in the packs," Bella said, looking Will over carefully. "Many, if not all of us, are looking forward to seeing the new policy changes come into effect."

"Only if they benefit all of the supernatural community," Will said, politely.

"Will has been a champion of advocating for the underserved classes," Hannibal said, proudly. "It is long overdue."

That caught Jack and Bella's attention. It was rare for Hannibal to admit his own failings so publicly. He could tell that they understood that Will was someone that Hannibal held in high esteem.

"Shall we?" Hannibal said, motioning for them to enter the box and to take their seats.

Will waited as Margot and Alana took their seats. Margot reached out and took Will's hand.

"Oh, no Will, please sit next to me. Hannibal and Alana are going to get lost in the opera and you need to keep me from snoring."

He laughed, sitting next to Margot as he looked at Hannibal. "I'm not sure if I can stay awake myself."

"Please. Have a seat here, Bella," he said, taking Bella's hand and brushing a polite kiss to her knuckles. "May I say that you are looking beautiful as ever. Is that *Bolt of Lightning* Jar Parfum?"

She chuckled, turning to look at him. "That is a neat party trick."

"It's no simple trick," Jack said, waiting politely for Bella to take her seat and then joining her in the seat next to hers. "Hannibal has an amazing sense of smell - possibly even better than werewolves."

Hannibal sat next to Alana in the front row. He would've preferred sitting next to Will, but he knew that he would get distracted by Will's presence and he really wanted to be able to lose his senses in the opera. The season opener was *Madama Butterfly* , one of his favorites, so he was glad that Will and Margot were well matched in their boredom and would keep each other entertained.

"I'm so excited to see this," Alana whispered to him, looking through the program booklet.

“As am I,” he said, softly. “I attended the world premiere at La Scala in 1904. It was quite disastrous and immediately cancelled after the first night. The conductor, Cleofonte Campanini, and Puccini nearly got into a fight during the final curtain call. Puccini rewrote the opera and presented it in 1906 in DC. It was well received by American audiences, though it was considered quite scandalous for a time.”

Alana chuckled, holding up her program as she made a face at Hannibal. “You have the best stories.”

Once they were settled, the waiter came into their box to ask if anyone would like refreshments, and Hannibal left it to them to sort themselves out. He sank into his chair, looking around at familiar faces in the nearby boxes, nodding his head to greet them. He watched as people turned to stare at Will, whispering amongst each other, and trying to find out what they could of Will’s identity. He had no doubt that by the first intermission, everyone would know that Will was an incubus demon.

A few minutes later, the lights flickered gently, and Hannibal relaxed into his seat as the first strains of the orchestral prelude began that would lead to the opening scene.

At the end of Act II, there was a short intermission. Hannibal stood in his box and formally received visitors. It was custom that no one would approach Hannibal until the last intermission, allowing him the space to enjoy the opera. Since *Madama Butterfly* had two intermissions, Hannibal was expected to greet members of the community at the second one. He didn’t always enjoy these visits, preferring to spend the time with Will and his guests, but even the vampire king had to abide by social customs.

By the time he took his seat, Will and Alana had exchanged seats so that Will was beside him. Hannibal was pleased and took Will’s hand, pressing a kiss on the back of it in full view of the public.

“Did you enjoy all the pomp and asskissing?” Will said, teasingly. “Everyone wants a piece of you -- your time, your favor, your attention. How do you even deal with that all the time?”

Jack laughed, leaning discreetly towards them. “Part and parcel of being vampire king of three kingdoms.”

“The Court does have a number of outdated traditions and customs,” Hannibal said, casually. “I suppose it’s just something that I’ve always known I had to do.”

“Do you ever wish you could just...take a break from all this?”

Hannibal smiled, pleased that Will echoed his thoughts. “I do think about it, now and then.”

Will cocked his head, gazing at him. “What if you could? Would you do it? Take a break.”

“If I had the right companion, I would.”

***

Hannibal took Will’s hand as they left the opera house, walking slowly down the front steps towards the line of cars parked in the front. He spotted their driver and the limo, and looked over his shoulder to see Margot and Alana taking a couple of pictures together to commemorate their evening.

“Lord Lecter! If I could have a moment of your time!”

Hannibal turned to see Freddie Lounds standing at the bottom of the steps, looking up at them. She was dressed in casual clothes, but wore a flashy red trench coat that went well with the red of her hair.

“Ms. Lounds, stalking is illegal in the state of Maryland,” Hannibal said, amused.

“Society gossip is beneath you, Freddie,” Will said, smirking at her.

She gave him a wide, fake smile. “I could care less who you’re sleeping with, Will. I actually am working on a very important investigation.”

Will snorted and rolled his eyes. “Trying to find your next victim for revenge porn?”

“Will, would you please escort Margot and Alana to the car, please?” Hannibal said, politely, trying to diffuse the situation. The last thing he needed was the two of them going into a verbal battle in full view of the public.

“Sure. Fine,” Will said, giving Freddie the stink eye and going back up the steps towards Margot and Alana.

“What can I do for you, Ms. Lounds?”

“I want to know about the deaths of the supernatural beings with their glands cut out. I want to know what you, the vampire king of Baltimore, is doing about it?”

“I assure you, we are working with law enforcement to find the person responsible.”

“Do you know anything about two missing supernatural beings? One is a warlock named Tobias Budge and a fairy named Timothy Woodland,” she said, staring at him with narrowed eyes. “Why haven’t they been reported as missing?”

Will stepped up beside Hannibal and frowned. “What are you talking about, Freddie?”

“I’m talking about the fact that Tobias Budge was a person of interest for these killings and that now he’s disappeared,” she said, meeting Hannibal’s eyes. “I think it’s interesting that you don’t seem to know what is happening to the supernatural beings in your own community. Aren’t you the vampire king? Shouldn’t you know these things?”

“Keep your voice down, Freddie!” Will hissed at her, taking a step closer towards her.

“Or what?” She said, smirking.

“All I can tell you, Ms. Lounds, is that we are cooperating with law enforcement on these terrible deaths,” Hannibal said, motioning for Will, Margot, and Alana to begin walking towards the limo. The driver quickly opened the door as the three of them slipped inside. Hannibal turned to look at Freddie, giving her a polite smile. “I admire your tenacity, Ms. Lounds, but I’m afraid you’re looking in the wrong place. I have nothing that I can share with you at this point of the investigation. Have a good evening.”

He got into the limo and stared out the window to see Freddie leaning against the stone columns by the steps. She wore a smirk on her lips as she looked at the limo, as if she could see through the tinted glass. Hannibal pursed his lips; it was clear to him that Freddie Lounds was talking to someone on the inside. Frederick and Randall were too loyal to him to speak about anything, so Hannibal determined that Freddie had somehow gotten in touch with Miriam Lass. They would both need to be dealt with.

“I really dislike that woman,” Will groused, leaning back in his seat.

“Who is she?” Margot said, curiously.

“Tabloid reporter,” Will said, shaking his head.

“Have I told you how Will and I met?” Hannibal said, smiling at Will as he laughed, covering his face with both of his hands.

“No, please don’t tell them, I will never live down my shame,” he said, shaking his head.

Alana and Margot exchanged amused looks. “You have to tell us now, Hannibal.”

“Jesus, fine, but I’m going to tell it,” Will said, smiling at Hannibal. “God only knows what you’d say.”

“Ah. But I reserve the right to provide commentary,” Hannibal said, sitting back as Will began to tell an edited version of the night he met Freddie Lounds that led him to Hannibal’s courts.

Distraction in place, Hannibal carefully planned what he would do about Miriam Lass.

***

After dropping off Alana and Margot, Hannibal invited Will for a nightcap at *Dolce* . They sat at the bar, enjoying a drink, when Bedelia sauntered towards them.

“I must congratulate you on making such a statement at the opera,” she said, looking at Hannibal.

“The gossip spread pretty fast,” Will commented, shaking his head in amusement.

“I’m quite pleased to see you so changed, Hannibal; and to see Will so very well fed,” she murmured, charmingly. “Though I am a little displeased with losing Randall.”

Hannibal wondered if he had interrupted a liaison between Bedelia and Randall. A siren and werewolf wasn’t an odd pairing; though if anyone could seduce the stoic werewolf, it would certainly be Bedelia. He would never ask her, not directly, as she would find the inquiry rude and invasive. Sirens were seductive and charming, but they were highly possessive and secretive of their lovers.

“I apologize, my dear, but I have great need of Randall at the moment. I’ve already spoken with Alpha Crawford to find you a temporary replacement so that you won’t lack for

werewolf security in your club."

Bedelia's lips curved into a smile. "See that you do, Hannibal. Your rooms are prepared for you if you would like to use it. Goodnight, gentlemen."

Hannibal ached to finally have a private moment with Will; he felt his fangs tingle with anticipation for the taste of Will's blood and to drink in his passion. "I would like for you to stay with me."

Will gave him a coy look. "Oh yeah?"

"I have missed you greatly and the entire evening has been a long night of teasing to my senses."

Will finished his drink, smirking at him. "Very poetic." He set his empty glass on the bar and leaned closer to Hannibal, brushing his prickly cheek against Hannibal's cool one, whispering into his ear. "Come on, take me upstairs and fuck me until morning."

***

Will clung to his shoulders, hands gripping Hannibal's hair, as he rode Hannibal's cock quickly. Hannibal's fangs pierced the meat of Will's neck, holding him against his mouth as he sucked on his blood. Will braced his feet on the mattress, knees digging into Hannibal's armpits as he slammed his hips down frantically on Hannibal's lap.

Hannibal held him close, his arms tight around Will's back to keep him from falling off of Hannibal's lap. He pulled his fangs out and licked the wounds with his tongue, kissing his way up Will's slippery, sweat-slick neck to capture his mouth, drinking down the muffled sounds of his loud moans.

"More! More, more, more!" Will panted, crying out as Hannibal renewed his grip on his demon lover and fucked up into Will's tight hole, growling low in his chest as he gave Will

what he wanted. “Yes! Yes! Jesus, I can’t come again...don’t stop...don’t stop!”

Hannibal twisted, moving off the side of the bed and turning them so that he could put Will on his back and take back the leverage he needed to drive his cock into Will’s heat. He braced his forehead against Will’s chest, enraptured by the thudding beat of his mortal heart, thrusting so hard against Will that even he would have bruises later.

“You’ll come again, with me,” Hannibal commanded, nipping at Will’s chest with his blunt teeth.

“Okay, okay, just…” Will keened noisily, wrapping his legs high around Hannibal’s back and trying to meet Hannibal’s thrusts. “Okay, shit...just a little more...Hannibal! Hannibal, please! Oh God…”

Hannibal groaned, closing his eyes when he felt Will’s muscles clench painfully tight around his cock. He fell against Will, his nature and instinct taking over as he slammed his fangs into Will’s chest, thrilled by the scream that Will gave out as his legs tightened around Hannibal as they both followed each other into shuddery, endless pleasure.

Will moaned and then collapsed against the bed, his arms and legs releasing Hannibal and flailed out on the bed. Hannibal was surprised to find that Will had passed out.

Hannibal chuckled, extremely smug that he could wear out his demon lover. He pulled his cock from within Will gently, and fell on his back beside Will. He could hear Will’s heartbeat steadying itself and Will inhaled deeply several times, rousing slowly. Hannibal was pleasantly exhausted; Will had drained him of his sexual energies, leaving Hannibal nearly unconscious.

But more surprisingly was Will’s reaction. Hannibal had always enjoyed feeding Will and giving him as much pleasure as he could stand; but this was definitely a highlight between them. He could sense deep satisfaction from Will and Hannibal felt that his own self-satisfaction was properly due.

“I can totally sense how smug you are right now,” Will mumbled, drowsily.

“I believe I now understand the phrase ‘rode hard and put away wet.’”

Will sputtered out a wet, disbelieving laugh and Hannibal turned his head to see the mirth in Will’s dazed blue eyes.

“My beautiful, greedy boy,” Hannibal murmured, contentedly. “How I wish I could keep you forever.”

Will blinked in surprise, and blushed prettily. “I can’t promise you forever, but...yeah, this is all I ever wanted.”

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!